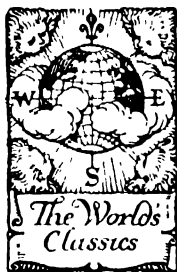


# CHILDHOOD, BOYHOOD AND YOUTH

BY LEO TOLSTOY

TRANSLATED BY  
LOUISE AND AYLMER MAUDE

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY  
AYLMER MAUDE



*Geoffrey Cumberlege*  
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## LEO TOLSTOY

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## INTRODUCTION

CHILDHOOD, Tolstoy's first published work, appeared in a Petersburg monthly magazine in September 1852. He was at that time serving as a Cadet in the Russian army in the Caucasus, and had rewritten the story four times before submitting it for publication. It stands at the crucial point where the modern novel begins. 'If,' says Prince D. S. Mirsky, 'there is a dividing line between the old and the modern novel, Tolstoy marks it', and he goes on to say that Tolstoy heralded a change in the texture of the narrative from the old dramatic method (which was still the method of Dostoévski) to a new method—'the point of view' method. The dramatic method gives the actions and words of the characters without explanation. Tolstoy, in his earlier period, never gives the actions or words of his characters without explanation. With him the great thing is the motive. Not what his people do, but why they do it, is important. He was not at all concerned with any plot for his story, but much concerned about the minds and motives of the actors.

*Childhood* had immediate success, and attracted the very favourable notice of Turgénev and Dostoévski. Tolstoy was much annoyed, however, that the magazine published what he had called *Childhood*, under the title of *The History of My Childhood*. He wrote at once to the editor to complain, and said: 'Without mentioning small alterations, I will name two which struck me most disagreeably . . . the title *Childhood* and my few words of preface had explained the idea of the work, but the title *The History of My Childhood* contradicts it. Who wants to be bothered

with a history of *my* childhood? The alteration is especially disagreeable because, as I wrote you, I wished *Childhood* to form the first part of a novel.'

Tolstóy himself was always a severe judge of his own productions, and some fifty years after the publication of *Childhood* wrote of it and its sequels, *Boyhood* and *Youth*:

'I have re-read them, and regret that I wrote them, so ill, artificially, and insincerely are they penned. It could not be otherwise: because what I aimed at was not to write my own history but that of the friends of my youth, and this produced an awkward mixture of the facts of their childhood and my own'. . .

The discerning reader with any knowledge of Tolstóy's feelings and opinions will, however, detect the fact that Nikólenka in the story is, to a large extent, Tolstóy's mouthpiece, though the occurrences in the story do not at all resemble the events of his own life. He could not, for instance, remember his mother who died before he was three, and his own father in no way resembled the father who appears in *Childhood*.

Before the second part, *Boyhood*, appeared in 1854 (just after the commencement of the Crimean war, in which Tolstóy was engaged) he published another story, *The Raid*; and before *Youth* appeared, in January 1857 (when the war was over and he had left the army), he had published nine other stories, including his three *Sevastopol* sketches.

*Childhood*, *Boyhood*, and *Youth*, show the extraordinary keenness with which Tolstoy observed physical and mental characteristics, as well as the subtlety of psychical analysis and the penetrating dissection of motives and character which developed during the

earlier part of his career and made possible the marvellous effects subsequently achieved in *War and Peace* and *Ann Karénina*

AYLMER MAUDE.

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## TO MY READERS

I YIELD to the common weakness of authors—an inclination to address the reader.

For the most part such addresses are written to obtain the reader's benevolence and indulgence. I too wish to say a few words to you, my reader; but to what end? I really do not know—judge for yourself.

Every author—in the widest sense of that word, whatever he writes—inevitably imagines to himself what effect his writing will have. To form an idea of the impression my work will produce, I must have some one particular sort of reader in view.

How can I know whether my work will or will not please, unless I have a particular type of reader in view? One part may please one and another part another, or what pleases one may even be disliked by some one else. Every frankly stated thought however complex, every clearly expressed fancy however absurd—cannot fail to find sympathy in some soul. If they can be born in one brain they will certainly find another which will respond. Therefore every such composition must please, but the whole of every such composition may not please even one person.

When a whole composition pleases somebody, then that composition is to my mind perfect of its kind. To attain that perfection—and every author hopes for perfection—I can find but one means, that of forming a clear and definite concept of the mind, the qualities, and the tendencies, of the expected reader.

So I will begin my address to you, reader, by describing you. If you find that you don't resemble the description, then don't read my story—you will find other stories to suit your own character. But if you are just as I imagine you to be, I am firmly

convinced that you will read me with pleasure, especially as at every good passage the thought that inspired me and restrained me from the stupidities I might have written, will also please you.

To be accepted as one of my chosen readers very little is demanded of you: only that you should be sensitive, that is, able sometimes to pity with your whole soul and even to shed a few tears when recalling a character you have loved from your heart, that you should rejoice in him without being ashamed of it, that you should love your memories, should be a religious man, should read my tale looking for parts that grip your heart and not for such as make you laugh, that you should not, out of jealousy, despise a good circle even if you do not belong to it, but should regard it calmly and dispassionately—and I will accept you among the number of my elect. Above all, you should be an *understanding* person—one who, when I get to know him, need not have my feelings and inclinations explained, but who I see understands me and in whom every note of my soul finds a response. It is difficult, and I think even impossible, to divide people into the intelligent and the stupid, or the good and the bad; but between the *understanding* and the *non-understanding* there is for me such a sharp line, that I cannot help drawing it between all whom I know. The chief distinctive mark of *understanding* people is the pleasure in intercourse with them—one need not explain or expound anything to them but may with full confidence pass on to them ideas very vaguely expressed. There are delicate intangible relations between feelings for which no clear expressions exist, but which are very clearly understood. One may boldly suggest such feelings and relations to such people. So that my first demand is *understanding*. And now I address myself to you, my reader, with an excuse for the roughness, and in some places lack of ease, in my

style. I am convinced in advance that when I explain to you the reason of this, you will not be exacting. One may sing in two ways: from the throat or from the chest. Is it not true that a voice from the throat is much more flexible than one from the chest, but then, on the other hand, it does not act on your soul? A chest voice, on the contrary, even if coarser touches you to the quick. As for me, if even in the most trivial air I hear a note taken from the depths of the chest, tears involuntarily come into my eyes. It is the same in literature: one may write from the head or from the heart. When you write from the head the words arrange themselves obediently and fluently on paper; but when you write from the heart, so many thoughts crowd into your mind, so many images into your imagination, so many memories into your heart, that the expressions become inexact, inadequate, intractable and rough.

It may be a mistake, but I always checked myself when I began to write from my head, and tried to write only from my heart.

I must also confess one strange prejudice to you.

In my opinion the personality of an author, a writer, one who composes, is almost a poetic personality, as I was writing in autobiographical form and wished to interest you in my hero as much as possible, I did not want any sign of authorship to be left, and therefore avoided all the mannerisms of authorship, such as learned expressions and formal periods.





## OUR TUTOR, KARL IVÁNYCH

ON the 12th of August 18 . . , exactly three days after my tenth birthday, on which I had received such wonderful presents, Karl Iványch woke me up at seven in the morning by hitting at a fly just above my head with a flap of blue sugar-bag paper fastened to a stick. He did this so awkwardly that he caught the little picture of my patron-saint, which hung from the top of my oak bedstead, and the dead fly fell right on my head. I pushed my nose from under the bed-clothes, put out my hand to steady the little picture which was still swinging, threw the dead fly on the floor, and looked at Karl Iványch with angry though sleepy eyes. He however, in his variegated, quilted dressing-gown, girdled with a belt of the same material, and with a red tasselled smoking-cap on his head, continued to walk round the room in his soft leather boots, aiming at and hitting the flies.

‘Of course I am small,’ I thought, ‘but why should he disturb me? Why does he not kill the flies round Volódya’s bed? See what a lot of them there are! No, Volódya is older than I. I am the youngest of all—that’s why he torments me. He thinks of nothing all his life long but how to make things unpleasant for me,’ I whispered. ‘He sees perfectly well that he has waked me up and frightened me, but he pretends not to notice it. Disgusting fellow! His dressing-gown and cap and tassel are all disgusting!’

While in my own mind I was thus expressing my vexation with Karl Iványch, he went up to his bed, looked at his watch which hung above it in a small beaded slipper, hung the flap on a nail in the wall and, evidently in the best of spirits, turned to us.

'*Auf, Kinder, auf!* . . . 's ist Zeit. Die Mutter ist schon im Saal!' <sup>1</sup> exclaimed he in his kind, German voice. Then he came up to me, sat down at the foot of my bed, and took his snuff-box from his pocket. I pretended to be asleep. Karl Iványch first took a pinch of snuff, wiped his nose, snapped his fingers, and only then turned on me. He began, laughingly, to tickle my heels.

'*Nun, nun, Faulenzer!*' <sup>2</sup> he said.

Much as I dreaded being tickled, I did not jump up or answer him, but only hid my head deeper under the pillow and kicked with all my strength to keep from laughing.

'How kind he is and how fond of us! How could I think so badly of him?'

I was vexed with myself and with Karl Iványch and wanted to laugh and to cry: my nerves were upset.

'*Ach, lassen Sie, Karl Iványch!*' <sup>3</sup> I shouted with tears in my eyes, thrusting my head out from under the pillow.

Karl Iványch was surprised, left the soles of my feet in peace, and anxiously began to inquire what was the matter, and whether I had had a bad dream. . . . His kindly German face, and the solicitude with which he tried to discover the cause of my tears, made them flow the faster. I was ashamed, and could not understand how, but a moment before, I had been able to dislike him, and consider his dressing-gown, cap, and tassel, disgusting. Now, on the contrary, all these things appeared extremely pleasing, and even the tassel seemed clear evidence of his goodness. I said that I was crying because of a bad dream—that mamma had died and was being carried to her

<sup>1</sup> 'Up, children, up! . . . It's time! Mother is already in the dining-room.'

<sup>2</sup> 'Now then, lazybones!'

<sup>3</sup> 'Oh, leave me alone.'

funeral. I invented all this, for I could not at all remember what I had dreamt that night; but when Kark Iványch, touched by my words, began to console and calm me, it seemed to me that I had really had that dreadful dream and I now shed tears for another reason.

When Karl Iványch left me, and having sat up in bed I began drawing the stockings on to my small feet, my tears flowed more gently, but the gloomy thoughts of my invented dream did not leave me. Nicholas, our attendant, a clean little man, always serious, neat, respectful, and great friends with Karl Iványch, came in. He brought our clothes; for Volódya a pair of boots and for me those detestable shoes with bows which I still wore. I was ashamed to let him see me cry, besides which the morning sun shone gaily into the room, and Volódya, standing at the wash-stand and mimicking Márya Ivánovna (our sister's governess), was laughing so merrily and so ringingly that even the serious Nicholas, with a towel over his shoulder, a piece of soap in one hand and a jug of water in the other, said with a smile:

'Have done, Vladímír Petróvich. Please wash now.'

I grew quite cheerful.

'*Sind Sie bald fertig?*'<sup>1</sup> came Karl Iványch's voice from the schoolroom.

His voice sounded severe and no longer had that kindly tone which had moved me to tears. In the schoolroom Karl Iványch was quite a different man: he was the instructor. I dressed and washed quickly, and with the brush still in my hand smoothing down my wet hair, obeyed his call.

Karl Iványch, spectacles on nose and book in hand, sat in his usual place between the door and the window. To the left of the door were two shelves, one of them ours—the children's—the other Karl Iványch's *own*. On ours were all sorts of books—

<sup>1</sup> 'Will you soon be ready?'

lesson-books and others: some standing, others lying down. Only two volumes of *Histoire des Voyages* in red bindings stood decorously against the wall, and then came long, thick, big and little books—bindings without books and books without bindings. We used to jam and shove everything there when told, before recreation, to tidy up the 'library', as Karl Iványch pompously called that shelf. The collection of books on his own shelf, if not so large as ours was yet more varied. I remember three of them: an unbound German pamphlet on the manuring of cabbage plots, one volume of a *History of the Seven Years' War*, bound in parchment and burnt at one corner, and a full course of hydrostatics. Karl Iványch spent most of his time reading, and had even injured his eyes at it, yet he never read anything but these books and the *Northern Bee*.

Among the things that lay on his shelf, the one chiefly connected in my memory with Karl Iványch was a cardboard disk attached to a wooden stand on which it could be moved by means of pegs. A caricature of a lady and a hairdresser was pasted on the disk. Karl Iványch, who was very clever at that sort of thing, had made the disk to protect his weak eyes from too bright a light.

I can still see before me his long figure in the quilted dressing-gown and red skull-cap, from beneath which one saw his thin grey hair. He sits beside a small table on which stands the disk with the hairdresser, throwing a shadow on his face; a book is in one hand and the other rests on the arm of his chair; before him lies his watch with the figure of a hunter on its face, a chequered handkerchief, a round, black snuff-box, his green spectacle-case, and a pair of snuffers on their tray. All this lies so precisely, so tidily in its place, that by this orderliness alone one can feel sure that Karl Iványch's conscience is clear and his soul at peace.

When one had had enough running about in the dancing-room downstairs, one would creep upstairs on tiptoe to the classroom and see Karl Iványch sitting in his arm-chair all alone and reading one or other of his favourite books with a calmly dignified expression on his face. Sometimes I caught him when he was not reading: his spectacles hung low on his large aquiline nose, his half-closed blue eyes had a peculiar expression in them, and there was a sad smile on his lips. All was quiet in the room; the only sounds to be heard were his regular breathing and the ticking of the watch with the hunter on its face.

Sometimes he did not notice me and I stood by the door thinking: 'Poor, poor, old man! There are many of us; we play, we are merry, and he is all alone, and no one caresses him. He says truly that he is an orphan. The story of his life is such a dreadful one! I remember how he told it to Nicholas. It is dreadful to be in his position!' And I felt so sorry for him that I would go up and take his hand and say, 'lieber Karl Iványch!'<sup>1</sup> He liked me to speak so, and would always pet me and was evidently touched.

On the other wall hung maps, nearly all of them torn but skilfully repaired by Karl Iványch. On the third wall, in the middle of which was a door leading to the stairs, hung, on one side, two rulers; one of them, ours, all cut about, and the other, a new one, his *own*, used by him more for incitement than for ruling lines: on the other side was a blackboard, on which our serious misdeeds were marked with circles and our little ones with crosses. To the left was the corner, where we were put on our knees.

How well I remember that corner! I remember the door of the stove, the ventilator in that door and the noise it made when turned. One used to kneel and kneel in the corner until one's knees and back

<sup>1</sup> 'dear Karl Iványch.'

ached, and used to think, 'Karl Iványch has forgotten me; he no doubt is comfortable sitting in his soft arm-chair and reading his hydrostatics, but what of me?' And to remind him of oneself one would begin softly to open and shut the stove door, or to pick bits of plaster off the wall, but if too big a piece of plaster fell noisily on the floor the fright alone was, truly, worse than any punishment. One would turn to look at Karl Iványch, and there he sat, book in hand, as if he noticed nothing.

In the middle of the room stood a table covered with torn black oilcloth under which in many places one saw the edges of the table all cut with penknives. Round the table stood several wooden stools, unpainted, but polished by long use. The last wall was taken up by three windows. The view from those windows was this: just in front of them was a road, every hole, every stone, every rut of which had long been familiar and dear to me; beyond the road was a clipped lime-tree avenue, behind which here and there a wattle-fence was visible; across the avenue one could see the meadow, on one side of which was a threshing-floor, and opposite to this a wood. Deep in the wood one could see the watchman's hut. From the window to the right, part of the verandah was visible on which the grown-up people generally sat before dinner. Sometimes while Karl Iványch was correcting a page of dictation one would glance that way and see mamma's dark head, somebody's back, and faintly hear sounds of voices and laughter coming from there, and one would be cross that one could not be there, and would think, 'When shall I be big, finish learning, and always sit, not over "Dialogues", but with those I love?' Vexation would turn to sadness and one would ponder so deeply, heaven only knows why and what, that one did not notice Karl Iványch getting angry about the mistakes.

Karl Iványch took off his dressing-gown, put on

his blue, swallow-tail coat with the padding and gathers on the shoulders, adjusted his cravat before the looking-glass, and took us downstairs to say 'good morning' to our mother.

## II

## MAMMA

MAMMA was in the drawing-room pouring out tea. In one hand she held the teapot and with the other the tap of the samovar, from which the water poured over the top of the teapot on to the tray. But though she was looking fixedly at it she did not notice this, nor did she notice our coming in.

So many past memories arise when one tries to recall the features of a beloved being that one sees those features dimly through the memories as if through tears. They are the tears of imagination. When I try to recall my mother as she was at that time I can only picture her brown eyes, always expressing the same kindness and love, the mole on her neck just below the place where the short curls grew, her embroidered white collar, and the delicate dry hand which so often caressed me and I so often kissed, but her general expression escapes me.

To the left of the sofa stood an old, English, grand piano, at which sat my dark-haired sister Lyúba, with rosy fingers just washed in cold water playing with evident effort Clementi's exercises. She was eleven. She wore a short gingham frock and white, lace-trimmed drawers, and could only take an octave as an arpeggio. Beside her, half turned towards her, sat Márya Ivánovna, wearing a cap with pink ribbons and a blue gown; her face was red and cross and became even more stern as soon as Karl Iványch entered. She looked severely at him and, without returning his bow, tapped the floor with her foot

and went on counting, '*Un, deux, trois; un, deux, trois*' yet louder and more imperatively than before.

Karl Iványch without taking the least notice of this, as usual in his German way approached my mother to kiss her hand. She roused herself, shook her head as if to drive away sad thoughts, gave Karl Iványch her hand and kissed him on his wrinkled temple while he kissed her hand.

'*Ich danke, lieber Karl Iványch,*'<sup>1</sup> and continuing to speak German, she asked: 'Did the children sleep well?'

Karl Iványch was deaf on one ear and now from the noise of the piano heard nothing. He stooped nearer to the sofa, and leaning with one hand on the table and standing on one leg, raised his skull-cap above his head with a smile, which then appeared to me the height of refinement, and said:

'You will excuse me, Natálya Nikolávna?'

Karl Iványch, for fear of catching cold in his bald head, always wore his red cap, but every time he entered the drawing-room, he asked permission to do so.

'Put it on, Karl Iványch. . . . I was asking you whether the children slept well,' said mamma, moving towards him and speaking rather loudly.

But he again heard nothing, covered his bald head with the red cap, and smiled even more pleasantly.

'Wait a moment, Mimi!' mamma said to Márya Ivánovna with a smile, 'one can't hear anything.'

When mamma smiled, beautiful as her face was it grew incomparably more lovely, and everything around seemed brighter. If in life's sad moments I could but have had a glimpse of that smile I should not have known what sorrow is. It seems to me that what we call beauty in a face lies in the smile. If a smile adds charm to a face, the face is beautiful, if it does not change it, the face is ordinary, and if it is spoilt by a smile, it is ugly.

<sup>1</sup> 'I thank you, dear Karl Iványch.'



When she had said good morning, mamma took my head in both her hands and tilted it back, then looked intently at me and said:

‘Have you cried this morning?’

I did not answer. She kissed my eyes and asked in German:

‘What did you cry about?’

When she had a friendly talk with us she always spoke in that language, which she knew perfectly.

‘I cried in my sleep, mamma,’ I said, remembering my invented dream in all its details and involuntarily shuddering at the thought.

Karl Iványch confirmed my words, but kept silent about the dream. After speaking of the weather—a conversation in which Mimi also took part—mamma put six lumps of sugar on a tray for certain specially esteemed servants, got up, and moved to the embroidery-frame which stood by the window.

‘Now go to papa, children, and tell him to be sure to come to me before he goes to the threshing-ground.’

The music, the counting, and the stern glances, were resumed, and we went to papa. Having passed through the room which still retained from grand-papa’s time the name of ‘the steward’s room’, we entered the study.

### III

#### PAPA

He stood at his writing table and pointing to some envelopes, papers, and piles of money, spoke angrily—heatedly explaining something to the steward, Jacob Mikháylov, who stood in his usual place between the door and the barometer with his hands behind his back, rapidly moving his fingers in all directions.

The more vehement papa became the more rapidly

the fingers twitched, and when papa paused the fingers too became still; but when Jacob himself spoke they were exceedingly restless and twitched desperately this way and that; by their movements one could, I think, have guessed Jacob's secret thoughts, but his face was always calm—expressing consciousness of his own worth, and at the same time subservience, saying as it were: 'I am right, but let it be as you decide!'

On seeing us, papa only said, 'Wait a minute,' and indicated by a movement of his head that one of us should shut the door.

'Oh, gracious heavens! What is the matter with you to-day, Jacob?' he said to the steward, shrugging one shoulder (it was a habit of his). 'This envelope with 800 rubles enclosed in it . . .'

Jacob drew the abacus nearer, moved the balls on it to show 800 and, fixing his eyes on an indefinite spot, awaited what would come next.

' . . . is for general expenses during my absence. You understand? You must get 1,000 rubles for the mill—is that right or not?—you must get back from the Treasury 8,000 rubles; for the hay, of which by your own reckoning there should be 7,000 puds for sale—reckon it at 45 kopeks—you will get 3,000 rubles; so altogether you will have . . . how much? 12,000 . . . is that so or not?'

'Just so, sir,' said Jacob.

But by the movement of his fingers I saw that he wanted to make some objection; papa stopped him.

'Well, of this money you will send 10,000 rubles to the Council for the Petróvsk estate. Now as to the money that is in the office—' continued papa (Jacob pushed back the 12,000 he had shown on the abacus and cast on 21,000)—'you will bring it to me, and will show it as paid out to-day.' (Jacob again disarranged the abacus and turned it over, no doubt to intimate that the 21,000 would also disappear.)

'This envelope with the money in it you will deliver to the address on it.'

I was standing near the table and glanced at the address. It was to 'Karl Iványch Mauer'.

Probably noticing that I had read what I ought not to know, papa placed his hand on my shoulder and with a slight movement turned me away from the table. I did not understand whether this was a caress or a rebuke, but in any case I kissed the large, muscular hand that lay on my shoulder.

'Yes, sir!' said Jacob. 'And what are your orders about the Khabárovka money?'

Khabárovka was mamma's estate.

'Keep it in the office and do not use it on any account without my order.'

Jacob remained silent for a few seconds, then suddenly his fingers began to move with increased rapidity, and changing the look of stolid obedience with which he had listened to his master's orders to his natural expression of roguish shrewdness, he drew the abacus nearer and began to speak:

'Permit me to report to you, Peter Alexándrych, it's just as you please, but the money can't be paid to the Council by the due date. . . . You were pleased to say,' he went on with deliberation, 'that the money due from the deposits, for the mill, and for the hay, must come in. . . .' (As he mentioned these items he cast them up on the abacus.) 'But I am afraid we may be wrong in our reckoning,' he added after a pause and with a thoughtful look at papa.

'Why?'

'Permit me to explain. As to the mill—the miller has twice been to see me begging for a delay, and swearing by Christ the Lord that he has no money. . . . Why, he is here even now—perhaps you would please speak to him yourself?'

'What does he say?' asked papa, making a sign with his head that he did not wish to speak to the miller.

'Why, that's quite plain! He says there has been nothing to grind and what little money he had has all been spent on the dam. And suppose we turn him out, sir, shall we gain anything? You were pleased to mention the deposits. I think I already reported that our money is sunk there and we shan't soon get it back. I sent a load of flour to town the other day for Iván Afanásich and with it a note about this business, and the answer is again the same: "I should be glad to do anything I could for Peter Alexándrych but the matter does not depend on me," and everything indicates that you will hardly get the receipts for another two months. . . . You were pleased to mention the hay—let us say it will sell for 3,000.'

He cast 3,000 on the abacus and was silent for about a minute, looking now at the abacus and now into papa's eyes, as much as to say:

'You see yourself that it is too little! And the hay, again, must first be sold; if we sell it now, you know yourself . . .'

He evidently still had a large supply of arguments, and probably for that reason papa interrupted him:

'I am not going to change my orders,' he said, 'but if there should really be a delay in receiving these sums it can't be helped, you will have to take as much from the Khabárovka money as will be necessary.'

'Yes, sir.'

One could see by Jacob's face and fingers that this last order afforded him great satisfaction.

Jacob was a serf, a very zealous and devoted man, and like all good stewards extremely close-fisted for his master, and he had the queerest notions as to what was advantageous for his master. He was always working to increase his master's property at the expense of his mistress's, and tried to prove that it was absolutely necessary to use the income from her estate for Petróvsk—the estate where we lived.

At that moment he was triumphant because he had quite succeeded in this.

Having wished us 'good morning', papa said we had kicked our heels in the country long enough, that we were no longer little children, and that it was time for us to learn seriously.

'I think you know that I am going to Moscow to-night, and I am taking you with me,' he said. 'You will live with grandmamma, and mamma will remain here with the girls; and you know her only pleasure will be to hear that you learn well and give satisfaction.'

Though from the preparations that had been going on for the last few days we were expecting something unusual, yet this news gave us a terrible shock. Volódya grew red and in a trembling voice gave papa our mother's message.

'So that is what my dream foreboded!' I thought. 'God grant that nothing worse happens.'

I felt very, very sorry for mamma, and at the same time was very pleased at the thought that we were now really big boys.

'If we are going to-day, I expect there will be no lessons. That's splendid!' I thought. 'However, I am sorry for Karl Iványch. He, no doubt, will be dismissed, or otherwise they would not have prepared that envelope for him. . . . It would be better to go on learning for ever than to go away, leave mamma, and offend poor Karl Iványch. He is very unhappy as it is!'

These thoughts flashed through my mind; I did not move, but stood looking at the black bows on my shoes.

After saying a few words to Karl Iványch about a fall in the barometer, and ordering Jacob not to feed the dogs, so that before leaving he might go out after dinner and try the young hounds, papa, contrary to my expectations, told us to go and do our

lessons, comforting us however with a promise to take us to the hunt.

On my way upstairs I ran out on to the verandah. At the door, with her eyes closed in the sun, lay my father's favourite borzoi, Milka.

'Milka dear,' I said patting her and kissing her on the muzzle, 'we are going away to-day. Good-bye! We shall never see one another again,' and I gave way to my feelings and began to cry.

#### IV

#### LESSONS

KARL IVÁNYCH was in a very bad humour. That was evident from his knitted brows and from the way he threw his coat into the drawer, angrily tied the girdle of his dressing-gown, and drew a strong line with his nail across the book of Dialogues to mark the place to which we were to learn it by heart. Volódya learnt pretty well, but I was so upset that I could do absolutely nothing. For a long time I looked senselessly at the Dialogues but could not read because of the tears that gathered in my eyes at the thought of the approaching parting. When the time came to repeat the dialogues to Karl Iványch, who listened to me with half-closed eyes (that was a bad sign), just at the place where one asks, '*Wo kommen Sie her?*'<sup>1</sup> and the other answers, '*Ich komme vom Kaffeehause,*'<sup>2</sup> I could no longer keep back my tears, and my sobs made it impossible to pronounce the words: '*Haben Sie die Zeitung nicht gelesen?*'<sup>3</sup> When it came to writing my copy, the tears that fell on my paper blotted it so that it looked as if I had been writing with water on blotting-paper.

<sup>1</sup> Where do you come from?

<sup>2</sup> I come from the coffee-house.

<sup>3</sup> Have you not read the newspaper?

Karl Iványch grew angry, put me on my knees, and kept saying that it was obstinacy, a puppet-show (a favourite expression of his), threatened me with the ruler, and demanded that I should beg pardon, though tears prevented my uttering a word. At last, probably feeling that he was unjust, he went into Nicholas's room and slammed the door.

From the schoolroom we could hear the conversation in the attendant's room.

'You have heard, Nicholas, that the children are going to Moscow?' said Karl Iványch, as he entered the room.

'Indeed, sir, I have.'

Probably Nicholas was about to rise, for Karl Iványch said, 'Keep your seat, Nicholas!' and then closed the door. I left the corner and went to the door to listen.

'However much good one may do people, however attached one may be to them, one must evidently not expect gratitude, Nicholas,' said Karl Iványch with feeling.

Nicholas, who was sitting by the window cobbling at a boot, nodded affirmatively.

'I have lived in this house twelve years and can say before God, Nicholas', continued Karl Iványch, raising his eyes and his snuff-box towards the ceiling, 'that I have loved them and attended to them more than if they had been my own children. You remember, Nicholas, when Volódya had fever, you remember how I sat for nine days by his bed-side without closing my eyes. Yes, then I was "kind, dear, Karl Iványch"; then I was wanted, but now,' he added with an ironical smile, '*now the children have grown big, they must learn seriously!* As if they were not learning here, Nicholas!'

'How could they learn more, one would think,' said Nicholas, having set down his awl and pulling the threads through with both hands.

'Yes, now I am not wanted and must be sent away; and what of the promises? What about gratitude? Natálya Nikolávna I am fond of and respect, Nicholas,' he said, lifting his hand to his breast, 'but what is she? . . . Her wishes are of no more account in this house than that,' and with an expressive gesture he threw a scrap of leather on to the floor. 'I know whose trick it is, and why I have become unnecessary. It's because I don't flatter and don't assent to everything as *certain people* do. I am accustomed to speak the truth always and to everybody,' he added proudly. 'God be with them! They won't grow rich by my not being here, and I—God being merciful—shall find a piece of bread for myself. . . . Is that not so, Nicholas?'

Nicholas raised his head and looked at Karl Iványch as if to assure himself that he really could find a piece of bread, but said nothing.

Karl Iványch went on talking much and long in that strain. He mentioned that his services had been better appreciated at some general's where he had lived formerly (it hurt me very much to hear this), he spoke about Saxony, about his parents, and about his friend, the tailor, Schönheit, and so on.

I sympathized with him in his sorrow and it hurt me that my father and Karl Iványch, whom I loved almost equally, had not understood one another, and going back into my corner, I sat down on my heels and considered how one might get them to agree.

When Karl Iványch returned to the schoolroom he told me to get up and prepare my exercise-book for dictation. When everything was ready, he sank majestically into his chair and in a voice which seemed to come from a great depth, began dictating the following:

'*Von al-len Lei-den-schaf-ten die grau-sam-ste ist . . . haben Sie geschrieben?*' Here he paused, slowly took a pinch of snuff, and continued with renewed strength



—‘*die grausamste ist die Un-dank-bar-keit . . . ein grosses U.*’<sup>1</sup> Expecting him to continue, after I had written the last word I looked at him.

‘Punctum,’<sup>2</sup> he said, with a hardly perceptible smile, and made a sign for us to hand him our copy-books.

He read this sentence, which expressed his innermost thought, several times over with different intonations and with an expression of the greatest satisfaction. Then he set us a history lesson, and seated himself at the window. His face was not dismal as it had been; it expressed the satisfaction of a man who had worthily avenged an insult offered him.

It was a quarter-to-one, but Karl Iványch did not seem to think of dismissing us: he kept setting us new tasks. Dullness and appetite grew in equal proportion. I watched with great impatience all the signs that indicated the nearness of dinner. Now a serf-woman passed with a dishcloth to wash the plates, now the rattling of crockery in the pantry was heard and the dining-room table being pulled out and chairs moved, and now Mimi, I.yúba, and Kátya (Kátya was Mimi’s twelve-year-old daughter) came in from the garden, but Fóka, the house-steward, who always came to announce a meal, did not appear. Only then could we throw aside our books and—regardless of Karl Iványch—run downstairs.

Steps were heard coming up the stairs but it was not Fóka! I had studied his walk and always recognized the creak of his boots. The door opened and a figure quite strange to me appeared in the doorway.

<sup>1</sup> ‘Of all passions the most inhuman is . . . have you written it? . . . the most inhuman is Ingratitude . . . a capital I.’ (Every noun in German is written with a capital letter.)

<sup>2</sup> ‘Full stop.’

## THE SIMPLETON

A MAN of about fifty, with a pale, long, deeply pock-marked face, long grey hair, and a scanty reddish beard, entered the room. He was so tall that to come in at the door he not only had to bow his head but to bend his whole body. He was wearing a tattered garment, something between a peasant coat and a cassock, and he held an enormous staff in his hand. He struck the floor with it with all his might as he entered the room and, lifting his eyebrows and opening his mouth extremely wide, burst into a terrible and unnatural laugh. He was blind in one eye, and the white iris of that eye moved incessantly and gave his face, already ill-favoured, a still more repulsive expression.

'Aha, caught!' he shouted, and running with short steps up to Volódyá seized him by the head and began carefully examining the crown of it, and then with a perfectly serious face he left Volódyá, came up to the table, and began blowing under the oil-cloth and making the sign of the cross over it. 'O-oh, a pity! O-oh, painful! . . . the dears . . . will fly away,' he then said in a voice trembling with tears, looking at Volódyá with emotion and wiping on his sleeve the tears that were really falling.

His voice was rough and hoarse, his movements hasty and jerky, his speech senseless and incoherent (he never used any pronouns), but his intonation was so touching and his yellow, misshapen face sometimes took on such a frankly sorrowful expression, that when listening to him it was impossible to repress a mingled feeling of compassion, fear, and sadness.

He was the saintly fool and pilgrim, Grísha.

Where he came from, who his parents had been,

what induced him to take up this wandering life, no one knew. All I know is that from the age of fifteen he had been known as a saintly fool who went barefoot summer and winter, visited monasteries, gave small icons to those he took a fancy to, and uttered enigmatic sayings which some people regarded as prophecies—that no one had ever known him in a different condition, that he had sometimes come to my grandmother's house and that some people said he was the unfortunate son of rich parents and a pure soul, while others said that he was simply a lazy peasant.

At last the long-wished-for and punctual Fóka appeared and we went downstairs. Grisha, sobbing and continuing to utter incoherent phrases, followed us, thumping the steps with his staff. Papa and mamma were walking up and down the drawing-room arm in arm, talking in low tones. Márya Ivánovna sat stiffly in one of the arm-chairs that stood symmetrically at right-angles near to the sofa, and in a stern but subdued voice imparted information to the girls who sat near her. As soon as Karl Iványch entered the room she glanced at him and turned away, and her face assumed an expression which might be interpreted to mean, 'I do not notice you, Karl Iványch.' One could see by the girls' eyes that they were impatient to tell us some very important news, but to jump up and come to us would have been an infringement of Mimi's rules. We had first to approach her and say, 'Bonjour, Mimi!' with a bow and a scrape, and only then might we begin a conversation.

What an unendurable person that Mimi was! One could not talk about anything in her presence: she considered everything improper. In addition she continually nagged us, '*Parlez donc français,*'<sup>1</sup> just when, as ill luck would have it, one wanted to chatter

<sup>1</sup> Do speak French.

in Russian. Or at dinner when one had just got the taste of some dish and did not wish to be disturbed, she would be sure to come out with her, '*Mangez donc avec du pain*'<sup>1</sup> or '*Comment est-ce que vous tenez votre fourchette?*'<sup>2</sup> 'And what has she to do with us?' one would think. . . . 'Let her teach the girls; we have Karl Iványch for that.' I fully shared his dislike for *certain people*.

'Ask mamma to get us taken to the hunt,' Kátya said to me in a whisper, catching hold of my jacket, while the grown-up people went into the dining-room before us.

'All right, we'll try.'

Grisha ate in the dining-room, but at a separate table; he did not lift his eyes from his plate, occasionally sighed, made terrible faces, and kept saying, as if to himself, 'a pity! . . . flown, the dove will fly to heaven. . . . Oh, there is a stone on the grave . . .!' and so on.

Mamma had been upset ever since the morning; Grisha's presence, words, and actions, evidently intensified this.

'Oh yes, I almost forgot to ask you something,' she said, handing my father a plate of soup.

'What is it?'

'Please have your dreadful dogs locked up; they nearly bit poor Grisha as he crossed the yard. They might attack the children too.'

Hearing himself mentioned, Grisha turned towards the table and showed the torn skirts of his garment and, continuing to chew, he muttered:

'Wished to bite to death. . . . God did not permit. Sin to set dogs on one! A great sin! Don't beat, elder,<sup>3</sup> why beat? . . . God will forgive . . . the days are not such.'

<sup>1</sup> Eat bread with it.

<sup>2</sup> How are you holding your fork?

<sup>3</sup> He called all men this, without distinction.—L.T.

'What is he saying?' asked papa, scrutinizing him sharply and severely. 'I understand nothing of it.'

'But I do,' answered mamma, 'he told me how one of the hunt-servants set the dogs at him on purpose, so he says, "Wished them to bite to death, but God did not permit," and he asks you not to have the servant punished.'

'Oh, that's it!' said papa. 'How does he know that I want to punish the hunt-servant? You know I am not very fond of such fellows in general,' he continued in French, 'but this one I particularly dislike, and no doubt . . .'

'Oh, don't say that, my dear!' said mamma as if frightened at something. 'How do you know?'

'I should think I have had opportunities to study this species of folk —such a lot of them come to see you, and they are all of one pattern. It's everlastingly the same story . . .'

It was evident that my mother was of quite a different opinion but did not want to dispute.

'Please give me a pie!' she said. 'Are they good to-day?'

'But it makes me angry,' continued papa, taking up a pie but holding it at such a distance that mamma could not reach it, 'it makes me angry when I see intelligent and educated people yielding to such deception.'

And he struck the table with his fork.

'I asked you to give me a pie,' she repeated, holding out her hand.

'And they do well,' papa continued, drawing his hand back, 'who put such people in prison. The only thing they can do is to upset those whose nerves are not strong as it is,' he added with a smile, noticing that this conversation was very disagreeable to mamma, and he handed her the pie.

'I will only say one thing to that: it is hard to believe that a man who though he is sixty, goes

barefoot summer and winter and always under his clothes wears chains weighing seventy pounds, and who has more than once declined a comfortable life offered him with everything found—it is hard to believe that such a man does all this merely because he is lazy. As for predictions,' she added after a pause and sighed, '*je suis payée pour y croire*;' I think I told how Kíryúshka foretold my father's death to him to the very day and very hour.'

'Oh, what have you done with me?' said papa, smiling and putting his hand up to his mouth on the side where Mimi was sitting (when he did this I always listened with keen attention, expecting something funny). 'Why did you remind me of his feet? I have looked at them, and now I shan't be able to eat anything.'

The dinner was drawing to an end. Lyúba and Kátya kept winking to us, fidgeting in their chairs, and in general showing great restlessness. This winking meant, 'Why don't you ask them to take us to the hunt?' I nudged Volódya with my elbow. Volódya nudged me and finally, taking courage, explained, first timidly, then firmly and louder, that as we had to leave to-day we should like the girls to go with us to the hunt, in the carriage. After a little discussion among the grown-ups the question was decided in our favour, and what was still better, mamma said she would herself come with us.

## VI

### PREPARATION FOR THE HUNT

DURING the sweets-course Jacob was sent for, and orders were given about the carriage, the dogs, and the saddle-horses—all in great detail, mentioning each horse by name. Volódya's horse was lame, and papa

<sup>1</sup> I have good cause to believe in them.

ordered one of the hunters to be saddled for him. The word 'hunter' sounded strange to mamma's ears: it seemed to her that a hunter must be something in the nature of a ferocious beast that would certainly bolt and kill Volódya. Despite the assurances of papa and of Volódya, who said with wonderful pluck that it was nothing, and that he liked it very much when a horse bolted, poor mamma went on saying that she would be upset during the whole outing.

The dinner was over: the grown-ups went to the study to drink coffee, and we ran out into the garden, to rustle our feet along the paths which were covered with fallen yellow leaves, and to talk. We began talking about Volódya's riding a hunter, about it being a shame that Lyúba could not run so fast as Kátya, about how interesting it would be to see Grisha's chains, and so on; but about our having to part we did not say a word. Our conversation was interrupted by the clatter of the approaching trap, at each corner of which sat a serf-boy. Behind the trap rode the hunt-servants with the dogs, and behind them the coachman, Ignát, on the horse intended for Volódya, and leading my ancient Kleper by the bridle. At first we all rushed to the fence through which one could see all these interesting things, and then, squealing and stamping, we ran upstairs to dress, and to dress so as to look as much like huntsmen as possible. One of the principal ways of doing this was to tuck our trousers into our high boots. We set to work without losing a moment, hurrying to get ready, and to run to the porch to enjoy the sight of the dogs and the horses and to have a talk with the hunt-servants.

It was a hot day. White, fantastic clouds had appeared on the horizon ever since morning; then a light breeze drove them nearer and nearer together so that at times they hid the sun. But many as were the clouds that passed and darkened, they were

evidently not fated to gather into a storm and spoil our parting pleasure. Towards evening they began to disperse again: some grew paler, lengthened out, and ran down towards the horizon; others, just overhead, turned into transparent white fleeciness; only one large black cloud settled in the east. Karl Iványich always knew where any cloud would go; he declared that that cloud would go to Máslovka, that there would be no rain and the weather would be beautiful.

Fóka, despite his advanced age, ran very nimbly and rapidly downstairs, called out, 'Drive up!' and, with his feet apart, took his stand at the middle of the entrance between the place where the coachman would bring the carriage and the threshold, in the attitude of one whom it was not necessary to remind of his duty. The ladies came down and after a little discussion as to which side to sit and to whom each was to hold on (though I don't think there was any need to hold on), they took their seats, opened their parasols, and started. When the trap moved off, mamma, pointing to the hunter, asked the coachman in a trembling voice:

'Is that horse for Vladimir Petróvich?'

When the coachman said it was, she waved her hand and turned away. I felt very impatient, mounted my horse, looked out between its ears, and made various evolutions in the yard.

'Please don't step on the dogs,' said one of the men.

'Never fear, I am not out for the first time!' I replied proudly.

Volódya mounted the 'hunter', but in spite of his firmness of character not without a certain tremor, and, patting it, he asked several times:

'Is she quiet?'

He looked very well on horseback, just like a man. His thighs in his tight trousers lay so well on the saddle that I felt envious, especially as, so far as I



could judge by my shadow, I was far from having as fine an appearance.

And now we heard papa's footsteps on the stairs. The dog-keeper collected the hounds that were running about, the huntsmen with the borzoi dogs called them in and mounted their horses, the groom led a horse up to the porch, and the hounds of papa's pack, which had been lying in various picturesque attitudes beside it, rushed to him. After him Milka, in her beaded collar, jingling its ring, ran out merrily. When she came out she always greeted the kennel-dogs: with some she would play, at others she would sniff or growl, and on some she would hunt for fleas.

Papa mounted his horse and we set off.

## VII

### THE HUNT

TÚRKA, the huntsman, with a shaggy cap on his head, a huge horn behind his shoulders, and a hunting knife in his belt, rode ahead of us all on a mouse-grey, hook-nosed horse. From that man's gloomy and fierce appearance one might have thought he was riding to mortal combat rather than to a hunt. At the hind legs of his horse ran the pack of hounds in an excited, mottled group. It was pitiful to see the fate of any unlucky dog that took it into its head to lag behind. When after great effort it succeeded in holding back the companion to which it was leashed, one of the dog-tenders riding behind would be sure to hit it with his whip, exclaiming: 'Back to the pack!' When we came out of the gate papa ordered the huntsmen and us to keep to the road, while he himself turned into the rye-field.

Harvesting was in full swing. The limitless, brilliantly yellow field was bounded only on one side by the tall, bluish forest, which then seemed to me a most distant, mysterious place beyond which either

the world came to an end or uninhabited countries began. The whole field was full of sheaves and peasants. Here and there among the thick, high rye where a strip had been reaped, one saw the bent back of a woman reaping, the swing of the ears as she grasped the stalks, a woman bending over a cradle in the shade, and bundles of rye scattered over the reaped parts of the field which was all covered with cornflowers. In another place peasants in their shirts and trousers stood on the carts loading up the sheaves and raising the dust on the dry scorched field. The village elder, in boots, and with a coat thrown over his shoulders and tallsticks in his hand, took off his felt hat when he saw papa in the distance, wiped his red-haired head and beard with a towel, and shouted at the women. The little roan papa rode went with a light, playful step, sometimes bending his head to his chest, pulling at the reins, and brushing off with his thick tail the gadflies and gnats that settled greedily on him. Two borzois with tense tails raised sickle-wise, and lifting their feet high, leapt gracefully over the tall stubble, behind the horse's feet. Milka ran in front, and with head lifted awaited the quarry. The peasants' voices, the tramp of horses and creaking of carts, the merry whistle of quail, the hum of insects hovering in the air in steady swarms, the odour of wormwood, straw, and horses' sweat, the thousands of different colours and shadows with which the burning sun flooded the light yellow stubble, the dark blue of the distant forest, the light lilac clouds, and the white cobwebs that floated in the air or stretched across the stubble—all this I saw, heard, and felt.

When we arrived at the Kalina wood we found the carriage already there, and surpassing our highest expectations, a one-horse cart in the middle of which sat the butler. From under the hay in it peeped a samovar, a pail with an ice-cream mould, and some

other attractive bundles and boxes. There could be no mistake: it meant tea in the open air, with ices and fruit. At the sight of the cart we loudly expressed our delight, for to drink tea in the woods, on the grass, and in general somewhere where no one had ever drunk tea before, was considered a great treat.

Túrka rode up to the chase, stopped, listened attentively to papa's detailed instructions as to where to line up and where to come out (though he never conformed to such instructions but followed his own devices), unleashed the dogs, strapped the leashes deliberately to his saddle, remounted his horse, and disappeared, whistling, behind the young birch-trees. The unleashed dogs first expressed their pleasure by wagging their tails, then shook themselves, pulled themselves together, and only after that, sniffing and wagging their tails, moved off in different directions at a slow trot.

'Have you a handkerchief?' asked papa.

I drew one out of my pocket and showed it.

'Well, tie that grey dog to it.'

'Zhirán?' I said, with the air of an expert.

'Yes, and run along the road. When you come to the glade, stop. And mind, don't come back to me without a hare!'

I tied the handkerchief round Zhirán's shaggy neck and rushed headlong towards the appointed place. Papa laughed and shouted after me:

'Quick, quick, or you'll be too late!'

Zhirán kept stopping, pricking his ears, and listening to the halloing of the huntsmen. I had not the strength to drag him from the spot and began to shout 'Atóu!' Then he would pull so hard that I could hardly hold him back and fell more than once, before reaching the appointed place. Having chosen a shady, level spot at the foot of a tall oak, I lay down in the grass, made Zhirán sit beside me, and waited. My fancy, as always happens under such circum-

stances, far outstripped reality: I imagined that I was hunting my third hare, when the voice of the first hound came from the wood, from where Túrka's voice reverberated even louder and with more animation. A dog gave a cry, and its voice was heard more and more frequently. Another deeper voice chimed in, and then a third, and a fourth. . . . These voices sometimes fell and sometimes overlapped one another. The sounds grew gradually louder and more continuous and were at last blent into a ringing, clamorous din. The chase was filled with sound and the hounds bayed in chorus.

When I heard this I seemed rooted to the spot. With my eyes fixed on the outskirts of the chase, I smiled inanely while perspiration poured down my face, and though the drops tickled me as they ran down my chin I did not wipe them off. It seemed to me that there could be nothing more decisive than this moment. This strained condition was too unnatural to last long. The dogs now bayed close to the outskirts of the chase, now gradually receded from me; there was no hare. I began looking around me. It was just the same with Zhirán: at first he tugged and yelped, but then lay down, put his head on my lap, and was quiet.

By the bare roots of the oak under which I was sitting, the dry grey earth, the dead oak-leaves, the acorns, the dry bare twigs, the yellowish-green moss, and the green grass-blades that sprouted here and there, teemed with swarms of ants. One after another they hurried along the paths they had made, some of them loaded, others not. I took up a twig and barred their way. It was a sight to see how, despising the danger, some crawled under the twig, others over it, and some, especially those carrying loads, seemed quite bewildered and did not know what to do: they stopped, looked for a way round, or turned back, or came up the twig to my hand and,

I think, intended to crawl up the sleeve of my jacket. My intention was diverted from these interesting observations by a butterfly with yellow wings that fluttered very enticingly before me. As soon as it had drawn my attention it flew a couple of paces from me, circled a few times round an almost withered white clover-flower, and alighted on it. I do not know whether it felt the warmth of the sun or was drinking juice from that flower, but it evidently felt very well satisfied. It now and then moved its wings and pressed close to the flower, and at last it became quite motionless. I rested my head on both hands and watched the butterfly with pleasure.

Suddenly Zhirán began to whine and gave such a violent tug that I nearly fell over. I turned round. At the edge of the chase leaped a hare, with one ear flat and the other erect. The blood rushed to my head and, forgetting everything for the moment, I shouted frantically, let the dog loose, and began to run myself. Hardly had I done so than I began to regret it—the hare squatted, gave a leap, and I saw no more of it.

But what was my shame when, following the hounds who came into the open in full cry, Túrka appeared from behind the bushes. He had seen my mistake (which was that I did not control myself) and, looking contemptuously at me, only said: 'Eh, master!' But you should have heard how he said it! It would have been pleasanter for me had he hung me from his saddle like a hare.

I stood on that spot for a long time in despair, did not call the dog, and only kept saying as I slapped my thighs:

'Oh God, what have I done!'

I heard the hounds run farther, a clattering at the other side of the chase, how they caught a hare, and how Túrka with his huge horn called the dogs back, but still I did not budge.

## VIII

### GAMES

THE hunt was over. A carpet was spread in the shade of some young birch-trees, and the whole company sat in a circle on the carpet. Gabriel, the butler, having trodden down the sappy green grass around him, was wiping plates and taking out of the box plums and peaches wrapped in leaves. The sun shone through the branches of the young birches, and threw round, quivering spots of light on the pattern of the carpet, on my legs, and even on Gabriel's perspiring bald head. A light breeze that blew through the foliage of the trees and over my hair and perspiring face, felt very refreshing.

When we had had our share of ices and fruit, there was nothing more to do on the carpet, and in spite of the scorching heat of the slanting sun-rays we got up and went to play.

'Well, what shall it be?' asked Lyúba, screwing her eyes up from the sun and hopping about on the grass. 'Let's play at Robinson.'

'No . . . that's too dull,' said Volódya, who had thrown himself lazily on the grass and was chewing some leaves. 'Always Robinson! If you must do something, we'd better build an arbour.'

Volódya was obviously putting on airs: he was no doubt proud of having ridden a hunter, and pretended to be very tired. But it may also be that he had too much sense and too little imagination quite to enjoy playing at Robinson. That game consisted in performing scenes from *The Swiss Family Robinson*, which we had read not long before.

'Please do. . . . Why don't you want us to have that pleasure?' insisted the girls. 'You can be Charles, or Ernest, or the father, whichever you like,' said Kátya.

trying to raise him from the ground by the sleeve of his jacket.

'Really I don't want to—it's tiresome!' said Volódya, stretching himself and at the same time smiling self-complacently.

'It would have been better to sit at home if no one wants to play,' Lyúba muttered through her tears.

She was an awful cry-baby.

'Well then, come along; only please don't cry. I can't bear it!'

Volódya's condescension gave us very little pleasure; on the contrary his lazy and bored look destroyed all the charm of the game. When we sat down on the ground and, imagining ourselves to be going fishing, began to row with all our might, Volódya sat with folded arms in a pose that was not at all like a fisherman's attitude. I told him so; but he answered that by moving our arms more or less we should not gain or lose anything and in spite of it all should not get far. I could not help agreeing with him. When pretending to be going to shoot, I set off for the woods with a stick over my shoulder, Volódya lay down on his back with his hands behind his head and told me he would pretend to be going there too. Such actions and words had a damping effect on the game and were extremely unpleasant, especially as at the bottom of one's heart one could not help agreeing that Volódya was behaving rationally.

I knew myself that not only could one not shoot a bird with a stick, but one could not even fire at all. It was just play. But if one were to reason like that, it would not even be possible to ride on chairs; and I think Volódya himself remembers how in the long winter evenings we covered an armchair with a shawl to make a carriage of it. One of us sat in front as the coachman, another behind as the footman, the girls were in the middle, three chairs were the horses—and we started on the journey! And what different

adventures happened on that journey, and how merrily and quickly those winter evenings passed! . . . If one goes by reality there can be no games. And if there are no games—what will be left?

## IX

## SOMETHING AKIN TO FIRST LOVE

PRETENDING that she was picking some kind of American fruit off a tree, Lyúba together with a leaf pulled down an enormous caterpillar, threw it on the ground in horror, raised her hands, and jumped away as if afraid something might spurt out of it. Our game stopped, and we all went down on the ground with our heads together to examine this curiosity.

I looked over Kátya's shoulder as she tried to lift the caterpillar with a leaf she placed in its way.

I had noticed that many little girls were in the habit of wriggling their shoulders when trying to adjust a low-necked frock that had slipped off their shoulders. I remember that Mimi always got angry at this movement, and said: '*c'est un geste de femme de chambre.*'<sup>1</sup> Kátya while leaning over the caterpillar made just that movement, and at the same time the wind raised the fichu on her little white shoulders. Her shoulder was, during that movement, within two inches of my lips. I no longer looked at the caterpillar but I looked and looked, and with all my might kissed Kátya's shoulder. She did not turn round but I noticed that her neck and ears grew red. Volódya, without raising his head, exclaimed contemptuously: 'What tenderness!'

But in my eyes there were tears.

I did not take my eyes off Kátya. I had long been used to her fresh, fair, little face and had always liked

<sup>1</sup> 'It is the gesture of a lady's maid.'



it; but now I examined it more closely and liked it still better.

When we returned to the grown-ups, papa, to our great delight, informed us that at mamma's request our departure had been put off till the next morning.

We rode back beside the carriage. Volódya and I, trying to excel one another in horsemanship and daring, caracolled near it. My shadow was longer than before, and judging by it I imagined that I had the appearance of a rather handsome rider; but the feeling of self-satisfaction I experienced was soon destroyed by the following incident. Wishing finally to captivate every one in the carriage, I lagged a little behind and then, using my whip and feet, urged my horse on, assumed an easy and graceful attitude, and wished to dash like a whirlwind past the side of the carriage where Kátya sat. Only I did not know whether to gallop past in silence or with a shout. But my insufferable pony, when it drew level with the carriage horses stopped in spite of all my efforts, and stopped so suddenly that I slipped from the saddle on to its neck and nearly tumbled off.

## X

### THE KIND OF MAN MY FATHER WAS

He was a man of the past age, and had the indefinable character common among those who were young then: a compound of chivalry, enterprise, self-confidence, amiability, and licentiousness. He regarded the people of our day contemptuously, and his opinion resulted as much from innate pride as from secret regret that he could not in our time have either the influence or the success he had had in his own. The two chief passions of his life were cards and women; he had won several million rubles in

the course of his life and had had affairs with innumerable women of all classes.

A tall, stately figure, a strange way of walking with short steps, a habit of jerking one shoulder, small ever-smiling eyes, a large aquiline nose, irregular lips that closed in an awkward but pleasing way—a defective enunciation—a kind of lisp—and a quite bald head—such was my father's exterior as far back as I can remember him, and with which he managed not only to be reputed, but to be, a man *à bonnes fortunes*<sup>1</sup> and to be liked by all without exception—by people of every class and position, and especially by those he wished to please.

He knew how to gain the upper hand in his relations with any one. Without having ever belonged to the very highest circles he was always in touch with people of those circles, and in such a way as to be respected by them. He knew just the limits of pride and self-confidence which, without offending others, raised him in the world's opinion. He was original, but not always so, and he used his originality as a means which sometimes served instead of social standing or wealth. Nothing in the world could arouse astonishment in him: in however brilliant a position he found himself, he always seemed born to it. He could so well hide from others and put away from himself the dark side of life, full of the small vexations and mortifications known to every one, that one could not but envy him. He was an expert in all that conduced to comfort and enjoyment, and knew how to avail himself of them. He was specially proud of the brilliant connexions he possessed, partly through my mother's family and partly through the comrades of his youth with whom in his heart he was angry for having risen high in rank while he had always remained a retired lieutenant of the Guards. Like all retired military men, he did not know how to

<sup>1</sup> A lady-killer.

dress fashionably; but then he dressed with originality and elegance. He always wore very wide and light clothes and beautiful linen with large turn-down cuffs and collars. . . . Anything however seemed to suit his tall figure and powerful build, bald head, and quiet self-assured movements. He was emotional, and even easily moved to tears. Often when in reading aloud he came to a pathetic place, his voice would falter, tears would show themselves in his eyes and he would put down the book in vexation. He was fond of music and, accompanying himself on the piano, sang songs by his friend A. . . , gipsy songs, or some arias from operas, but he did not like classical music, and regardless of the accepted opinion, frankly said that Beethoven's sonatas made him feel sleepy and dull, and that he knew nothing better than: 'Wake me not, while young,' as Semenova used to sing it, or 'Not Alone', as the gipsy girl Tanyúsha sang it. His nature was one that needed a public for a good action, and he only thought that good, which the public considered so. Heaven knows whether he had any moral convictions. His life was so full of distractions of all kinds that he had no time to form convictions, and, besides that, he was so fortunate in life that he saw no need for them.

In old age he formed settled opinions and immutable rules, but all founded on an entirely practical basis. Those actions and that way of life which gave him happiness or pleasure he considered good, and thought that everybody should always act so. He spoke very convincingly, and that capacity, it seemed to me, enhanced the elasticity of his principles: he could describe the selfsame action as a very charming bit of mischief, or as the meanest rascality.

## XI

WHAT WENT ON IN THE STUDY AND  
THE DRAWING-ROOM

It was getting dusk when we reached home. Mamma sat down to the piano, and we children brought paper, pencils, and paints, and arranged ourselves at the round table to draw. I had only blue paint; but for all that I took it into my head to draw the hunt. Having very vividly depicted a blue boy on a blue horse, and blue dogs, I was in doubt whether one could paint a blue hare, and ran into papa's study to consult him. Papa was reading something, and in answer to my question whether there were blue hares, replied, 'Yes, my dear, there are,' without raising his head. I returned to the round table and painted a blue hare, but then found it necessary to change the hare into a bush. I did not like the bush either, and made it into a tree, then the tree into a cornstack, and the stack into a cloud, and finally I so smeared my whole sheet of paper with blue paint that I tore it up in vexation, and sat down to dream in the lounge chair.

Mamma was playing the second concerto of Field, her music-master. I was dreaming, and there awoke in my fancy light bright and translucent memories. She started playing Beethoven's Sonata Pathétique, and I remembered something sad, oppressive, and gloomy. Mamma often played those two pieces, and so I well remember the feeling they aroused in me. That feeling resembled memories, but memories of what? It was as if I were recalling something that had never been.

Opposite to me was the door of the study, and I saw how Jacob and some other men, bearded and in peasant coats, entered it. The door immediately closed behind them. 'Now business has begun!' I

thought. It seemed to me that nothing in the world could be more important than what was being done in the study. That idea was strengthened by the fact that generally everybody who approached that door spoke in whispers and walked on tiptoe, while from it came the sound of papa's loud voice and the smell of his cigar, which always, I don't know why, attracted me.

While half asleep I was suddenly struck by a familiar creaking of boots in the steward's room. Karl Iványch, with some notes in his hand, approached the door on tiptoe but with a gloomy and determined look, and knocked lightly at it. He was admitted and the door again closed.

'If only some misfortune does not happen,' I thought. 'Karl Iványch is angry: he is ready for anything. . . .'

Again I dozed off.

No misfortune however occurred. An hour later I was again awakened by the creaking of the same boots. Karl Iványch, wiping with his handkerchief tears which I noticed on his cheeks, came out of the study and, muttering something to himself, went upstairs. Papa followed him out and came into the drawing-room.

'Do you know what I have just decided?' he said in a cheerful voice, putting his hand on mamma's shoulder.

'What, my dear?'

'I am taking Karl Iványch with the children. There is room in the trap. They are used to him, he seems to be really attached to them, and 700 rubles a year won't make any difference to us, *et puis au fond c'est un très bon diable.*'<sup>1</sup>

I could not at all grasp why papa was abusing Karl Iványch.

<sup>1</sup> And then at bottom he is a very good devil.

'I am very glad both for the children and for him,' said mamma, 'he is an excellent old man.'

'You should have seen how touched he was when I told him to keep the five hundred rubles as a gift . . . but what was most amusing was the bill he brought to me. It is worth looking at,' he added with a smile, as he gave her a note in Karl Iványch's hand. 'It's lovely!'

This is what the note contained:

For the children, two fishing-rods	0 r. 70 kopeks
Coloured paper, gold border, and paste for boxes, as presents .	6 r. 55 „
Book and a bow, presents to the children . . . . .	8 r. 16 „
Trousers for Nicholas . . . . .	4 r. 0 „
Promised by Peter Alexándrych from Moscow in the year 18— a gold watch . . . . .	140 r. 0 „
Total to be received by Karl Iványch Maurer, besides his salary . . . . .	159 r. 41 „

On reading this note, in which Karl Iványch demanded payment for all he had spent on presents, and even for a present promised to him, every one would conclude that Karl Iványch was merely an unfeeling and mercenary egotist, and every one would be mistaken.

On entering the study with the note in his hand and a speech he had prepared in his head, he intended to show papa eloquently all the injustice he had endured in our house; but when he began to speak in the touching voice and with the pathetic intonations he used when dictating to us, his eloquence acted chiefly on himself, so that when he reached the place where he said, 'Sad as it will be for me to part from the children'—he became quite confused, his voice trembled, and he had to get his chequered

handkerchief out of his pocket. 'Yes, Peter Alexándrych,' he said through his tears (there was nothing of this in his prepared speech), 'I have grown so used to the children that I don't know what I shall do without them. I would rather serve you without salary,' he added, wiping his eyes with one hand and handing in the bill with the other.

That Karl Iványch was speaking sincerely at that moment I can affirm, for I know what a kind heart he had; but how to reconcile the bill with his words remains a mystery to me.

'If you are sad at leaving, I should be still sadder to part from you,' said papa, patting him on the shoulder. 'I have changed my mind now.'

Not long before supper Grísha came into the room. From the moment he had entered our house he had never left off sighing and weeping, which in the opinion of those who believed in his power of prophecy foreboded some calamity to our houses. He began to take leave, and said he would start on his way next morning. I winked at Volódya and went out of the room.

'What is it?'

'If you want to see Grísha's chains, let us go upstairs at once to the men-serfs' quarters. Grísha sleeps in the second room, and we can sit capitably in the cupboard and see everything.'

'Excellent! Wait here and I will call the girls.'

The girls came running, and we went upstairs. Having decided, not without some dispute, who should first enter the dark cupboard, we settled down and waited.

## XII

### GRÍSHA

WE all felt rather scared in the dark cupboard; we pressed close to one another and did not say a word. Almost immediately after us Grisha entered the room with soft steps. In one hand he held his staff, in the other a tallow candle in a brass candlestick. We did not dare to breathe.

‘Lord Jesus Christ! Most Holy Mother of God! To the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost . . .’ said he breathing heavily and with different intonations and abbreviations natural only to one who often repeated those words.

After placing his staff in a corner of the room, with a prayer, he began to undress. Having untied his old black girdle he slowly took off his tattered nankeen coat, folded it carefully, and hung it over the back of a chair. His face now had not its usual hurried and inane expression; on the contrary he was calm, pensive, and even dignified. His movements were slow and considered.

When he was in his underclothes, he slowly let himself down on to the bed, made the sign of the cross on every side of it, and with an effort, as was evident from his frown, readjusted the chains under his shirt. After sitting still for a while and carefully examining his linen, which was torn in several places, he rose, and lifting the candle, with a prayer, to the level of the glass case in which were several icons, he crossed himself before them and turned the candle upside down. It crackled and went out.

Through the windows which looked out towards the forest the moon, which was almost full, shone in. The long white figure of the simpleton was lit up on one side by its pale silvery beams, and on the other its shadow, together with that of the window-frames,



fell on the floor, on the walls, and reached up to the ceiling. In the yard outside the watchman was striking a copper plate.

Folding his huge hands on his breast, Grisha stood with bowed head, sighing heavily and continually before the icons, and then sank with difficulty to his knees and began to pray.

At first he softly said familiar prayers, only accentuating certain words, then he repeated them, but louder and with more animation. Then he began to pray in his own words, trying, with evident difficulty, to express himself in Church-Slavonic. His words were awkward but pathetic. He prayed for all his benefactors (so he termed those who received him), among them for my mother and ourselves; he prayed for himself, asking God to forgive him his grievous sins, and he kept repeating: 'Lord, forgive my enemies!' He rose groaning, and again and again repeating the same words, fell on the floor and rose again despite the weight of his chains, which gave a hard, sharp sound as they struck the floor.

Volódya pinched my leg very painfully, but I did not even turn round. I only rubbed the place with my hand, following all Grisha's movements and words with a child's surprise, pity, and emotion.

Instead of the fun and laughter I had expected when I entered the cupboard, I trembled, and felt a sinking of the heart.

Grisha remained long in that state of religious exaltation, improvising prayers. Now he would repeat several times, 'Lord, have mercy,' but each time with new strength and expression; then he said, 'Forgive, Lord, teach what to do . . . teach what to do, O Lord!' with an expression as if he expected an immediate answer to his words; then piteous sobs were all one heard. . . . He raised himself to his knees, folded his hands on his breast, and grew silent.

I softly thrust my head out of the door and held

my breath. Grisha did not move; deep sighs broke from his breast; a tear stood in the dim pupil of his sightless eye which was lit up by the moon.

'Thy will be done!' exclaimed he suddenly, in an inimitable tone, sank with his forehead on the ground, and sobbed like a child.

Much water has flowed by since then, many memories of the past have lost their meaning for me and become dim recollections, even pilgrim Grisha has long since completed his last pilgrimage; but the impression he made on me and the feeling he evoked, will never die in my memory.

Oh, great Christian, Grisha! Your faith was so strong that you felt the nearness of God; your love was so great that the words flowed of themselves from your lips—you did not test them by your reason. . . . And what lofty praise you gave to His Majesty when, unable to find words, you fell weeping to the ground! . . .

The emotion with which I listened to Grisha could not last long; in the first place because my curiosity was satisfied, and secondly because I had pins and needles in my legs from sitting so long in one position, and I wished to join in the general whispering and commotion I heard behind me in the dark cupboard. Some one touched my hand and whispered, 'Whose hand is this?' It was quite dark in the cupboard, but I knew at once by the touch and by the voice whispering just above my ear, that it was Kátya.

Quite unconsciously I took hold of her bare elbow and pressed my lips on her arm. Kátya was no doubt surprised at this action and she drew away her arm; this movement of hers upset a broken chair that stood in the cupboard: Grisha lifted his head, looked slowly round, and, repeating a prayer, made the sign of the cross towards all the corners of the room. Talking in whispers we ran noisily out of the cupboard.

## NATÁLYA SÁVISHNA

IN the middle of the last century in the homesteads of the village of Khabárovka, there used to run about in a coarse linen dress a bare-footed, plump and red-cheeked girl, Natáša. As a reward for the faithful services of her father, the clarionet-player, Sávva, and at his request, my grandfather took her 'upstairs' and gave her a place among my grandmother's female servants. As a housemaid Natáša distinguished herself by her meekness and zeal. When my mother was born and a nursemaid was needed, this duty was put upon Natáša. In that new post she earned praise and rewards for her activity, fidelity, and attachment to her young mistress. However the powdered head and the stockings and buckles of the brisk young footman, Fóka, who came much across her in the course of his work, captivated her rude but loving heart. She even braced herself to go and ask my grandfather's permission to marry Fóka. Grandpapa regarded her wish as a sign of ingratitude. He was angry with her, and as a punishment sent poor Natáša to a cattle-farm on a property of his in the steppes. Six months later however, as no one could be found to replace her, Natáša was brought back to the estate and restored to her former position. Having returned from her exile in her coarse linen dress, she went to grandpapa, fell at his feet and begged him to restore her to his favour and kindness and to forget the folly that had possessed her and which, she swore, would never return. And she really kept her word.

After that she was no longer called Natáša, but by the more respectful name of Natálya Sávishna, and wore a cap like a married woman: the whole store of her love she transferred to her young lady.

When a governess took her place with my mother

she was given the keys of the store-room and all the household linen and provisions were placed under her charge. She fulfilled these new duties with the same zeal and love. She put her whole life into care for her master's belongings; saw waste, damage, and pilfering, everywhere, and tried by all means to counteract them.

When mamma married, anxious to show her gratitude in some way to Natálya Sávishna for her twenty years' work and devotion, she called her in and, having expressed her gratitude and affection in most flattering terms, handed her a paper with a government stamp, granting her her freedom, and said that whether she remained in our service or not, she should always have a pension of 300 rubles a year. Natálya Sávishna heard all this in silence, then took the document, looked at it, angrily muttered something, and ran out of the room slamming the door behind her. Not understanding such strange behaviour, mamma went a little later into Natálya Sávishna's room. She was sitting on her trunk with tear-stained eyes, fingering her handkerchief and looking fixedly at the torn bits of the deed of emancipation which lay on the floor before her.

'What is the matter, my dear Natálya Sávishna?' mamma asked, taking her by the hand.

'Nothing, ma'am,' Natálya Sávishna answered. 'Evidently I have displeased you in some way, that you are turning me out of the house. . . . Well, I shall go.'

She pulled away her hand and, hardly able to restrain her tears, was going out of the room. Mamma held her back, embraced her, and they both began to cry.

Ever since I can remember myself, I remember Natálya Sávishna, her love and her caresses; but it is only now that I know how to value them; it never then entered my head to realize what a rare, wonder-

ful being that old woman was. She not only never spoke, but it seems that she never even thought, of herself; her whole life consisted of love and self-sacrifice. I was so accustomed to her disinterested and tender affection for us that I did not imagine it could have been otherwise. I was not in the least grateful to her, and never asked myself whether she were happy or satisfied.

Sometimes on the plea of necessity I would escape from lessons to her room, would sit down and begin to day-dream aloud, quite unabashed by her presence. She was always busy, either knitting a stocking, rummaging in the chests which filled her room, or making a list of the linen, while she listened to all the nonsense I was talking.—‘So when I am a general I will marry a wonderful beauty, will buy myself a roan horse, build a glass house, and send for Karl Iványich’s relatives from Saxony—’ &c., and she kept saying, ‘Yes, my dear, yes.’ Generally when I got up to go she would open a blue chest, inside the lid of which—I remember as if I had seen it yesterday—were pasted a coloured picture of an hussar, a picture of a pomatum pot, and a drawing of Volódya’s; would take out a piece of pastille, light it, and, waving it about, would say:

‘This, my dear, is still one of the Ochákov pastilles. When your sainted grandfather—may the Kingdom of Heaven be his—went against the Turk, he brought it back from there. This is the last piece left,’ she would add with a sigh.

The chests that filled her room contained absolutely everything. No matter what was wanted, it was usually said: ‘We must ask Natálya Sávisna for it,’ and really, after rummaging awhile, she would find the thing that was wanted and would remark: ‘It’s lucky I put it away.’ In those chests there were thousands of articles about which no one in the house, but she, either knew or cared.

Once I got angry with her. This is what happened. One day at dinner when pouring myself out a glass of kvas,<sup>1</sup> I dropped the decanter and spilt the kvas over the tablecloth.

'Call Natálya Sávisbna to admire what her darling has done!' said mamma.

Natálya Sávisbna came in, saw the puddle I had made, and shook her head. Then mamma said something in her ear, and shaking her finger at me she left the room.

After dinner when in the highest spirits I went bounding into the dancing-room, Natálya Sávisbna suddenly jumped from behind the door with the tablecloth in her hands, caught me, and despite my desperate resistance began rubbing my face with the wet cloth, saying, 'Don't soil tablecloths, don't soil tablecloths!' I was so offended that I howled with anger.

'What!' said I to myself, pacing up and down the room and choking with tears, 'Natálya Sávisbna—no, simply Natálya—speaks so rudely to me and even strikes me in the face with a wet cloth as if I were a serf-boy. No, this is awful!'

When Natálya Sávisbna saw me sobbing she ran away at once, and I continued to walk up and down, considering how I could pay out the impertinent Natálya for the insult she had offered me.

In a few minutes she returned, came timidly up to me, and began to console me:

'Don't, my dear, don't cry . . . forgive me, old fool that I am . . . I have done wrong . . . but forgive me, my pet . . . here you are. . . .'

She took from under her shawl a screw of red paper in which there were two caramels and a fig, and with trembling hand gave it me. I could not look the kind old woman in the face, but accepting her present I turned away and my tears flowed still faster, no longer from anger but from love and shame.

<sup>1</sup> A drink made of rye malt, generally non-intoxicating.

## XIV

## PARTING

TOWARDS noon on the day after the events I have described the calash and the britzka stood at the front door. Nicholas was dressed for the journey, that is to say, his trousers were tucked into his boots and a girdle was tied as tightly as possible over his old coat. He stood in the britzka packing coats and pillows for a seat. When it seemed to him too high, he sat down on the pillows, and jumping on them, pressed them down.

'For heaven's sake, Nicholas Dmítrich, do let me pack master's casket with your things!' pleaded papa's valet, panting, and thrusting his head out of the calash. 'It is a small . . .'

'You should have spoken before, Mikhéy Iványch,' answered Nicholas, speaking rapidly and crossly and flinging a bundle to the bottom of the britzka with all his might. 'By heaven, my head's in a whirl as it is, and then you come with your caskets!' he added, raising his cap and wiping large drops of perspiration from his sunburnt forehead.

Domestic serfs bare-headed, in peasant coats, overcoats, or shirtsleeves, women in coarse linen dresses with striped kerchiefs on their heads and babies in their arms, and bare-footed children, stood around the porch looking at the vehicles and talking among themselves. One of the drivers, a bent-backed old man wearing a winter cap and a sleeveless coat, held the pole of the calash and, touching it here and there, looked thoughtfully at the understructure of the vehicle. The other, a good-looking young fellow in a white shirt with turkey-red gussets under the arms, pushed his conical black felt-hat now on one ear and now on the other as he scratched his fair curly hair, and having put his coat and thrown

the reins on the box, cracked his little plaited whip and looked now at his boots and now at the coachmen who were greasing the britzka. One of them was straining to hold the jack, the other, bending over the wheel, was carefully greasing the axle and the hub, and not to waste the remainder of the grease with which he lubricated them, smearing it on the rim below. The different coloured, weak-kneed post-horses stood by the paling and whisked the flies away with their tails. Some of them stretched out their shaggy swollen legs, blinked their eyes, and dozed; others, for very dullness, rubbed one another or chewed the leaves and stalks of the rough, dark-green ferns that grew beside the porch. There were several borzoi dogs, some of whom lay panting in the sun, while others went into the shade under the calash and the britzka and licked the grease round the axles. The air was full of a dusty mist and the horizon was purplish-grey, but there was not a single cloud in the sky. A strong west wind raised columns of dust from the roads and the fields, bent the tops of the tall lime and birch trees in the garden, and carried the falling yellow leaves far away. I sat by the window impatiently awaiting the completion of all these preparations.

When everybody had assembled in the drawing-room, beside the round table, to spend a few minutes together for the last time, it did not enter my head what a sad moment awaited us. The emptiest thoughts crossed my mind. I asked myself which driver would go with the britzka and which with the calash? Who would travel with papa, and who with Karl Iványch? And why do they insist on coddling me up in a scarf and wadded jacket?

‘As if I were a weakling; no fear of my freezing. If only it would all get finished and we could be seated and go!’

‘To whom am I to give the list of the children’s



linen?' asked Natálya Sávisna—who had entered with tear-stained eyes and a note in her hand—addressing mamma.

'Give it to Nicholas and then come to say good-bye to the children.'

The old woman wanted to say something, but suddenly stopped, covered her face with her handkerchief and with a wave of her arm left the room. I felt a twinge in my heart when I saw that movement, but my impatience to start was stronger than my sympathy, and I continued to listen quite indifferently to my father's conversation with my mother.

They were talking about things that evidently did not interest either of them: what must be bought for the house, what to say to Princess Sophie and to Madame Julie, and whether the roads would be good.

Fóka entered, stopped at the door, and in just the tone he used to say 'Dinner is served' said 'The horses are ready.' I noticed that mamma started and grew pale at this announcement, as if she had not expected it.

Fóka was told to close all the doors of the room.<sup>1</sup> This amused me very much—'It's as if we were all hiding from somebody!'

When all had sat down, Fóka too sat down on the edge of a chair, but hardly had he done so when the door creaked and everybody turned round. Natálya Sávisna entered hurriedly, and without raising her eyes seated herself at the door, on the same chair as Fóka. I can still see Fóka's bald head, his wrinkled, immovable face, and the bent figure of the kind old woman with her cap, from under which her grey hair showed. They sat close together on one chair and were both of them ill at ease.

I continued to feel careless and impatient. The ten

<sup>1</sup> It was customary before starting on a journey, for all the members of a household to assemble and sit in silence before saying 'good-bye'.

seconds we sat with closed doors seemed to me a whole hour. At last all got up, crossed themselves, and began to take leave. Papa embraced mamma and kissed her several times.

'That will do, my love!' he said. 'We are not parting for ever.'

'All the same it is sad!' said mamma, her voice choking with tears.

When I heard that voice and saw her quivering lips and eyes filled with tears, I forgot everything and felt so sad, pained, and frightened, that I wanted to run away rather than take leave of her. I understood at that moment that, embracing papa, she was already bidding us farewell.

She began kissing Volódya and making the sign of the cross over him so many times that I pressed forward, thinking she would now turn to me, but she blessed him again and again and pressed him to her breast. At last I embraced her and, clinging to her, began to cry and cry, thinking of nothing but my grief.

When we went to take our seats in the vehicles, the tiresome domestics waylaid us in the hall. Their 'let me kiss your hand', their resounding kisses on my shoulder, and the odour of tallow with which their heads were greased, aroused in me a feeling much like the repulsion irritable people feel. Under the influence of that feeling I kissed Natálya Sávisna very coldly on her cap when she, all in tears, took leave of me.

It is strange that I can see the faces of all the domestic serfs as if it had happened to-day, and could draw them in minutest detail; but mamma's face and attitude completely escape my imagination, perhaps because all the time I could not once muster up courage to look at her. It seemed to me that if I did so her grief and mine would reach impossible limits.

I threw myself into the calash before any one else, and sat down on the back seat. The raised hood of the calash prevented my seeing anything, but my instinct told me that mamma was still there.

'Shall I look at her again or not? . . . Yes, for the last time!' I said to myself, and I leant out of the calash towards the porch. Just then mamma, with the same thought, came up to the opposite side of the calash and called me by name. Hearing the voice behind me, I turned to her so quickly that we knocked our heads together. She smiled sadly, and kissed me very, very closely for the last time.

When we had gone a few yards I made up my mind to look at her again. The wind lifted the small blue kerchief which was tied round her head; with drooping head, and face covered by her hands, she was slowly ascending the steps of the porch. Főka was supporting her.

Papa sat beside me and did not say anything. Tears were choking me and something so pressed my throat that I was afraid of being suffocated. . . . When we had come out on to the highway we saw a white handkerchief some one was waving from the balcony. I began to wave mine, and this action calmed me a little. I continued to cry, and the thought that these tears were a proof of my sensitiveness pleased and consoled me.

When we had gone a verst, I settled down more comfortably, and began gazing with fixed attention at the object nearest before me—the flanks of the side horse which ran in front of me. I watched how that piebald horse flicked its tail, how it struck one foot against the other, and how the driver's plaited whip reached it and its legs began to move in unison. I watched how the harness and the rings on it jerked, and I continued to gaze at it till the harness near the tail became covered with lather. I began to look around: at the ripe waving ryefields, at the dark

fallow ground on which here and there a plough, a peasant, and a mare with its foal, were seen, at the mile-posts, and even at the coachman's box, to see which driver we had with us; and before the tears had dried on my face my thoughts were already far from my mother, from whom I had perhaps parted for ever. But every memory led my thoughts to her. I remembered the mushroom I had found in the birch avenue the day before, and how Lyúba and Kátya quarrelled as to who was to pick it, and I remembered how they cried when taking leave of us.

'I am sorry to be parted from them, and from Natályá Sávishna, and from the birch avenue, and from Fóka! And ill-natured Mimi—I am even sorry to be parted from her. I regret them all, all! And poor mamma!' And again tears filled my eyes, but it was not for long.

## XV

## CHILDHOOD

HAPPY, happy, irrecoverable days of childhood! How can one fail to love and cherish its memories? Those memories refresh and elevate my soul and are the source of my greatest delight.

Having run about to your heart's content you sit at the tea-table in your high chair. It is late, you have long ago finished your cup of milk and sugar and sleepiness closes your eyes, but you do not move from your place but sit and listen. And how can you help listening? Mamma is talking to some one and the sound of her voice is so sweet, so charming. The very sounds say so much to my heart! With eyes dimmed by sleepiness I look attentively at her face, and suddenly she grows quite quite little—her face is no larger than a button, but I still see it quite plainly, I see how she glances at me and smiles. I

like seeing her so tiny. I screw up my eyes still more and she becomes no bigger than figures on one's retina, but I move and the enchantment is broken. I screw up my eyes, turn round, and try all I can to renew it—but all in vain.

I get down, and settling in an easy chair, feet and all, curl cosily up in it.

'You will fall asleep again, Nikólya!' says mamma: 'You had better go upstairs.'

'I don't want to sleep, mamma,' I answer, but indistinct yet sweet fancies fill my imagination; healthy childish sleep weighs down my eyelids, and in a moment I lose consciousness and sleep till I am awakened. When half awake, I feel some one's gentle hand touching me, and by the touch alone I know that it is she, and while yet asleep involuntarily catch that hand and press it close close to my lips.

Everybody has already gone away; only one candle is burning in the drawing-room; mamma had said that she would wake me herself. It is she who has seated herself on the chair in which I am sleeping, she has passed her wonderful tender hand over my hair, and her dear familiar voice sounds above my ear:

'Get up, dear one: it's time to go to bed.'

Nobody's indifferent looks embarrass her and she is not afraid to shower all her tenderness and love on me. I do not stir but kiss her hand still harder.

'Get up, my angel!'

She puts her other hand on my neck and her fingers rapidly touch and tickle me. It is quiet and dark in the room; my nerves are excited by the tickling and by waking from sleep; mamma sits close to me, she touches me; and I am aware of her scent and hear her voice. All this makes me jump up, throw my two arms round her neck, press my head to her breast and, catching my breath, exclaim:

'Oh, dear, dear mamma, how I love you!'

She smiles her sad, enchanting smile, takes my head in both her hands, kisses my forehead, and puts me on her lap.

'So you love me very much?' She is silent for a moment, and then says: 'Mind you always love me, never forget me. If your mamma is no more, you won't forget her? You won't, Nikólya?'

She kisses me still more tenderly.

'Stop! Don't even say that, my darling, my dearest!' I cry, kissing her knees, and tears stream from my eyes—tears of love and rapture.

After that, when I got upstairs and stood before the icons in my little wadded dressing-gown, what a wonderful feeling I had as I said: 'Lord, bless papa and mamma.'

When I repeated the prayers which my baby lips had first lisped after my beloved mother, my love for her and my love of God mingled strangely into one feeling.

After praying I would tuck myself under the quilt, and my heart would feel light, buoyant, and joyful: one dream follows another, but what are they about? They are elusive, intangible, but full of pure love and hope of bright happiness. I would remember Karl Iványch and his sad lot (he was the only unfortunate person I knew) and I would feel so sorry for him, so fond of him, that tears would flow from my eyes and I would think: 'God grant him happiness, make it possible for me to help him and lighten his sorrow: I am ready to sacrifice everything for him.' Then I would press a favourite china toy—a hare or a dog—into a corner of my soft down pillow and look with pleasure at it lying there so snug and warm. Then I would pray again, asking God to make everybody happy, so that all should be contented; and that it should be fine to-morrow for our outing; and then I would turn over on to the other side, thoughts and dreams would grow confused and intermingle, and

I would fall gently and peacefully asleep, my face still wet with tears.

Will the freshness, freedom from care, need of love, and strength of faith, that one possesses in childhood, ever return? What time can be better than that in which the two finest virtues—innocent joy and an unbounded need to love—are the only motives of one's life?

Where are those ardent prayers? Where that best of all gifts—those tears of tender emotion? A consoling angel came down and smilingly dried those tears and wafted sweet dreams into the unspoilt childish imagination.

Can it be that life has left such heavy traces in my heart that those tears and that ecstasy have gone from me for ever? Can it be that only the memory of them is left?

## XVI

### THE VERSES

NEARLY a month after we moved to Moscow, I was sitting writing at a large table upstairs in my grandmother's house. Opposite me sat our drawing-master, putting the final corrections to a black chalk drawing of the turbaned head of a Turk. Volódya, craning his neck, stood behind the teacher and looked over his shoulder. This head was Volódya's first drawing in black chalk, and was that very day to be presented to grandmamma as it was her name-day.

'And won't you shade it a little more here?' asked Volódya, rising on tiptoe and pointing to the Turk's neck.

'No, that's unnecessary,' said the master, putting the chalk and holder into a box with a sliding lid. 'It's all right now; don't touch it any more. Well, and you, Nicholas, won't you tell us your secret at last?' he added, rising and still looking out of the corner of his eyes at the Turk. 'What will you give

your grandmother? I really think it would have been best if you too had drawn a head. Well, good-bye, young gentlemen!' he said, took his hat and a ticket<sup>1</sup> and went out.

At that moment I myself thought it would have been better to have drawn a head instead of doing what I was working at. When we had been told that it would soon be our grandmamma's name-day and that we ought to prepare presents to give her, the idea came into my head of writing some verses for the occasion, and I immediately made two rhymed verses, hoping to do the rest as easily. I don't at all remember how an idea so strange for a child entered my head, but I remember that I was very pleased with it, and in reply to questions about it, replied that I would certainly give grandmamma a present, but would tell nobody what it was to be.

Contrary to my expectations it turned out that except the two verses I had made up on the spur of the moment, despite all my efforts I could compose nothing more. I began reading the verses there were in our books; but neither Dmítriev nor Derzhávin helped me at all. On the contrary they only convinced me of my incapacity. Knowing that Karl Iványch was fond of copying verses, I began surreptitiously to hunt among his papers, and among some German verses I found one in Russian, which he no doubt had written:

'To Madame L. . . . Petróvskoy, 3rd June 1828.

'Think of me near,

Think of me far,

Oh, think of me.

From to-day till always

Think of me still to my grave,

How faithfully loved I have.'

<sup>1</sup> A master was given a ticket after each lesson he had given and was paid when the number of tickets reached a certain figure.



This poem, written in a fine round hand on a good sheet of notepaper, pleased me by the touching feeling with which it was imbued; and I immediately learnt it by heart, and decided to take it as a model. Things then went much more easily. By the name-day my congratulations, in twelve lines, were ready, and sitting at the schoolroom table I was copying them out on vellum paper.

I had already spoilt two sheets . . . not that I thought of changing anything—the verses seemed to me excellent—but after the third line the last words turned upwards more and more, so that even from a distance one could see that they were written crookedly and were fit for nothing.

The lines on the third sheet were just as crooked as the other two, but I decided that I could not copy them again. In my poem I congratulated grandmamma, wished her many happy returns of the day, and finished with the words:

‘We’ll try to comfort you and cheer,  
And love as our own mother dear.’

It seemed not at all bad, but the last verse strangely offended my ear.

‘And love as our own mother dear,’ I repeated to myself. ‘What other word would rhyme with cheer? Beer? Spear? . . . Oh, it will do! It’s better than Karl Iványch’s anyhow.’

And I wrote down the last line. Then in our bedroom I read the whole composition aloud with expression and gestures. There were some lines that did not scan at all, but I did not dwell on them; only the last line struck me still more unpleasantly. I sat on my bed and pondered:

‘Why did I write, *As our own mother?* She is not here, so there was no need even to mention her. It is true that I love and respect grandmamma, still it’s not the same. . . . Why did I write that? Why

have I told a lie? Of course it's only poetry, still I ought not to have done it.'

At that moment the tailor entered bringing us our new suits.

'Well, it can't be helped!' I thought, in great impatience, thrust my verses under my pillow and ran to try on my Moscow clothes.

These proved splendid; the brown jackets with their bronze buttons fitted closely—not like those they made for us in the country, allowing for growth. The black trousers, also fitting tightly, showed up our muscles and came down over our boots wonderfully well.

'At last I too have real strap trousers!' I reflected, beside myself with pleasure as I examined my legs from every side. Although the new clothes felt very tight and uncomfortable I hid this fact from everybody, and said, on the contrary, that they were quite easy, and if there were any fault, it was only that they were a little loose. After that I stood a long time before the looking-glass, combing my generously pomaded hair; but try as I would I could not smooth down the tufts on the top of my head. As soon as, to test their obedience, I stopped pressing them down with the brush, they rose and stuck out in all directions, giving my face a most comical expression.

Karl Iványch was dressing in another room, and a blue coat and some white things were taken to him through the schoolroom. The voice of one of grandmother's maids was heard at the door leading to the stairs and I went out to see what she wanted. She was carrying a highly starched shirt-front, and told me she had brought it for Karl Iványch, and had not slept that night so as to get it washed in time. I undertook to deliver the shirt-front, and asked whether grandmother was up yet.

'Oh yes! She's had coffee and the priest has come. . . . What a fine fellow you look!' she added with a smile, surveying my new clothes.

This remark made me blush. I turned round on one foot, snapped my fingers, and gave a jump, to let her feel that she did not quite know what a fine fellow I really was.

When I took Karl Iványch his shirt-front he no longer needed it: he had put on another and, stooping before a small looking-glass that stood on a table, was holding the full bow of his cravat in both hands and trying whether his clean-shaven chin went easily in and out of it. After pulling our clothes straight all round and asking Nicholas to do the same for him, he took us down to grandmamma. It amuses me to remember how strongly we all three smelt of pomatum as we descended the stairs.

Karl Iványch carried a box he had made himself, Volódya had his drawing, and I my verses: each had ready on his tongue the words with which he would present his gift. Just when Karl Iványch opened the door of the music-room the priest was putting on his vestments, and the first sounds of the service were heard.

Grandmamma was already in the music-room: she stood stooping, leaning on the back of a chair, and prayed piously; papa stood beside her. He turned towards us and smiled, noticing how we hurriedly hid our presents behind our backs and stopped just at the door trying to remain unnoticed. The whole effect of surprise, on which we had counted, was lost.

When everybody went up to kiss the crucifix, I suddenly felt that I was suffering from an insupportable fit of shyness, and aware that I should never have the courage to offer my present, I hid behind the back of Karl Iványch who, having expressed his good wishes in the choicest words, passed the little box from his right to his left hand, presented it to grandmamma, and stepped a few paces aside to let Volódya come forward. Grand-

mamma seemed delighted with the box, which was bordered in gold, and expressed her thanks with the kindest of smiles. One noticed however that she did not know where to put the box, and probably for that reason asked papa to see how wonderfully cleverly it was made.

After satisfying his curiosity, papa handed it to the priest, whom the little article seemed to please extremely: he shook his head, looking now at the box and now at the master who had been able to make such a beautiful thing. Volódya presented his Turk, and also earned the most flattering appreciation from all sides. My turn had come, and grandmamma looked towards me with a smile of encouragement.

Those who have experience of shyness know that this feeling increases in direct proportion to its duration, and that one's resolution diminishes in the same ratio: that is to say, the longer that condition lasts the more insuperable it becomes and the less resolution remains.

The last of my courage and resolution deserted me while Karl Iványch and Volódya were presenting their gifts, and my shyness reached its utmost limits: I felt the blood continually rushing from my heart to my head, one blush following another on my face, and large drops of perspiration appearing on my forehead and nose. My ears were burning, I felt my whole body shiver and grow damp with perspiration, and I shifted from one foot to the other but did not move a step.

'Well, Nicholas, let's see what you have got! Is it a box or a drawing?' said papa to me. There was no help for it; with trembling hand I gave the crumpled, fatal roll to my grandmother, but my voice quite refused to serve me and I stood silent in front of her. I could not recover myself at the thought that, instead of the expected drawing, they would read out to everybody my worthless verses, and the

words: *as our own mother dear*, would seem clearly to show that I had never loved her and had forgotten her.

How can I describe what I suffered when grandmamma began to read my verses aloud, when, not making it out, she stopped in the middle of a line to glance at papa with a smile which then seemed to me ironical, when she did not pronounce the words as I wished them to be said, and when, on account of her weak eyesight, without reading to the end, she gave the sheet to papa and asked him to re-read it from the beginning? I thought she did it because she was tired of reading such bad and crookedly written verses, and in order that papa might himself read the last verse which so clearly proved my want of feeling. I expected him to smack me on the nose with those verses, and to say: 'Horrid boy, don't forget your mother . . . take that for it!' But nothing of the kind occurred: on the contrary, when it had all been read, grandmamma said, '*Charmant!*' and kissed me on the forehead.

The box, the drawing, and the verses, were laid beside two cambric handkerchiefs and a snuff-box with mamma's portrait on its lid, on the adjustable flap of the invalid chair in which grandmamma generally sat.

'Princess Varvára Ilínichna!' announced one of the two huge footmen who used to stand behind grandmamma's carriage.

Grandmamma was deep in thought over the portrait on the tortoise-shell snuff-box and did not answer.

'Shall I ask her in, your excellency?' the footman asked.

## XVII

## PRINCESS KORNAKÓVA

'Ask her in,' grandmamma replied, settling deeper into her chair.

The princess was a woman of about forty-five, small, fragile, lean, and sallow, with disagreeable, greenish-grey little eyes, the expression of which clearly contradicted the unnaturally sweet curves of her small mouth. Under her velvet bonnet with its ostrich feather one saw her pale reddish hair, her eyebrows and eyelashes seeming still paler and redder against the unhealthy colour of her face. In spite of all this, owing to her easy movements, her tiny hands, and the peculiar leanness of all her features, her general appearance had something fine and energetic about it.

The princess talked a great deal, and in her loquacity belonged to that class of people who always speak as if they were being contradicted though no one else has said a word. She sometimes raised her voice and then gradually lowering it suddenly began to speak with fresh vivacity, and looked round on those who were taking no part in the conversation as if trying to strengthen herself by so looking.

Though the princess had kissed grandmamma's hand and kept calling her *ma bonne tante*.<sup>1</sup> I noticed that grandmamma was displeased with her: she raised her eyebrows in a peculiar way while she listened to the explanation of why Prince Michael had been quite unable to come in person to congratulate her despite his great desire to do so, and, answering in Russian to the princess's French, said in a special, drawling tone:

'I am very grateful to you, my dear, for your

<sup>1</sup> My kind aunt.

attention; but as to Prince Michael's not having come, why mention it? . . . He always has a mass of things on hand; and after all what pleasure could he find in sitting with an old woman?'

And not giving the princess time to rejoin, she continued:

'And how are your children, my dear?'

'Quite well, I am thankful to say, *ma tante*; they grow, learn, and get into mischief, especially Etienne, the eldest. He is becoming such a scapegrace—quite unmanageable; but then he is intelligent, *un garçon qui promet*.<sup>1</sup> Just fancy, *mon cousin*,' she continued, addressing herself exclusively to papa because grandmamma, not at all interested in the princess's children but wishing to brag a little about her own grandchildren, was carefully taking my verses from under the box and beginning to unfold them. 'Just fancy, *mon cousin*, what he did the other day . . .'

And the princess, leaning over to papa, began to tell him something with great animation. Having finished her tale, which I did not hear, she burst out laughing and, looking inquiringly into papa's face, said:

'What a boy, *mon cousin*! He deserved a whipping, but the prank was so clever and amusing that I forgave him, *mon cousin*.'

And, fixing her eyes on grandmamma, the princess continued to smile without saying anything more.

'Do you really *beat* your children, my dear?' asked grandmamma, significantly raising her eyebrows and particularly emphasizing the word *beat*.

'Oh, *ma bonne tante*,' the princess answered in a kind voice, after a rapid glance at papa, 'I know your opinion on that matter, but allow me to disagree with you on that one point. Much as I have thought, read, and listened to advice on that subject, experience has, all the same, brought me to the conviction

<sup>1</sup> A promising lad.

that it is necessary to act on children through fear. To make anything of a child, fear is necessary. . . . Is it not so, *mon cousin*? And what, *je vous demande un peu*,<sup>1</sup> do children fear more than the rod?

Saying this she glanced interrogatively at us, and I confess that at that moment I felt uncomfortable.

'Say what you like, but a boy up to twelve, and even up to fourteen, is still a child. Now with a girl it is a different matter.'

'How fortunate that I am not her son!' thought I.

'Yes, that 's very fine, my dear,' said grandmamma, folding up my verses and putting them away under the box as if after that she did not consider the princess worthy of hearing such a production, 'that is all very well, but tell me, please, what delicacy of feeling, after that, can you expect in your children?'

And considering this argument incontrovertible, grandmamma added to break off the conversation:

'However, every one can have his own opinion on that subject!'

The princess did not reply but only smiled condescendingly, as though to show that she forgave these strange prejudices in one whom she respected so much.

'Oh, but let me make your young people's acquaintance,' she said, looking at us with an affable smile.

We rose and having fixed our eyes on the princess's face did not at all know what to do to show that we had become acquainted.

'Well, kiss the princess's hand,' said papa.

'I beg you to love your old auntie,' she said, kissing Volódyá on his hair. 'Though I am but distantly related to you, I go by our friendship and not by degrees of relationship,' she added, addressing herself principally to grandmamma; but grandmamma was still displeased with her, and said:

<sup>1</sup> I just ask you.



'Eh, my dear, just as if kinship of that kind counted nowadays!'

'This one will be a society man,' said papa, pointing to Volódya, 'and this one a poet,' he added, just when I was kissing the princess's dry little hand and very distinctly imagining a rod in that hand, a bench beneath the rod, and so on and so on.

'Which one?' asked the princess, holding me back by my hand.

'This little one, with the tuft of hair sticking up,' answered papa, with a merry smile.

'What has my tuft done to him? Is there nothing else to talk about?' thought I, and went away into a corner.

I had the strangest ideas about beauty, and even thought Karl Iványch one of the handsomest people in the world, but I knew very well that I was not good looking, and I was not at all mistaken, so that every reference to my appearance offended me painfully.

I very well remember how once at dinner—I was six years old then—they were speaking about my appearance, and mamma, trying to find something good in my face, said that I had clever eyes and a pleasant smile, and then, yielding to papa's proofs and to what was obvious, had to admit that I was plain: and afterwards, when I was thanking her for the dinner,<sup>1</sup> she patted my cheek and said:

'Remember, Nicholas, that no one will love you for your face, so you must try to be a clever and good boy.'

Those words not only convinced me that I was no beauty, but also that I should certainly be a good and clever boy.

In spite of that there were moments when I was overcome by despair: I imagined that there could be

<sup>1</sup> It was customary after dinner for every one to thank the master and mistress of the house for providing it.

no happiness on earth for one with such a broad nose, such thick lips, and such small, grey eyes as mine; and I asked God to perform a miracle, and make me handsome, and all I then had and everything I might have in future I would have given for a handsome face.

## XVIII

## PRINCE IVÁN IVÁNOVICH

WHEN the princess had listened to the verses and showered praises on their author, grandmamma softened, dropped calling her 'my dear' and addressing her as *you* (instead of the familiar and friendly *thou*),<sup>1</sup> talked to her in French, and invited her to come with all her children that evening. The princess accepted the invitation and after staying a little while went away.

So many visitors came that day to congratulate grandmamma that in the courtyard near the entrance there were several carriages the whole morning.

'*Bonjour, chère cousine!*' said one of the guests, entering the room and kissing her hand.

He was a man of about seventy, tall, in military uniform with large epaulettes, a large white cross showing beneath his collar, and with a calm open countenance. I was struck by the freedom and simplicity of his movements. Though there remained but a sparse semi-circle of hair on the back of his head, and though the shape of his upper lip gave clear evidence of a scarcity of teeth, his face was still remarkably handsome.

At the end of the last century, while still very young, Prince Iván Ivánovich had made a brilliant career, thanks to his honourable character, good looks,

<sup>1</sup> In Russian, as in other Continental languages, the use of the second person singular ('thou' and 'thee') often indicates close friendship or familiarity.

remarkable courage, distinguished and powerful connexions, and especially to his good fortune. He continued in the service, and very soon his ambition was so well satisfied that there was nothing more for him to wish for in that respect. From his early youth he had behaved as if he were preparing himself to occupy the brilliant position in the world that fate subsequently gave him; consequently, though during his dazzling and rather ambitious life there were as in all lives some misfortunes, disappointments, and mortifications, he never once changed his calm character, his high ideas, or his fundamental principles of religion and morality, and he gained general respect not so much by his brilliant position as by his consistency and fortitude. He was not a man of great intellect, but thanks to a position which allowed him to look down on all the vain turmoil of life, his views were elevated. He was kindly and sensitive, but rather cold and supercilious in his intercourse with others. This came from his occupying a position in which he could be useful to many people, so that he tried by coldness to guard himself against the continual requests and cajolery of those who only wanted to make use of his influence. This coldness however was softened by the condescending politeness of a man of the highest society. He was well educated and well read; but his education had stopped at what he had acquired in his youth, that is, at the end of the last century. He had read everything remarkable in the field of philosophy and eloquence that had been written in France in the eighteenth century, had a thorough acquaintance with the best French literary works, so that he was able, and liked, often to quote passages from Racine, Corneille, Boileau, Molière, Montaigne, and Fénelon; was brilliantly versed in mythology, and in French translations had studied with profit the ancient monuments of epic poetry, had a sufficient knowledge of history, which he

drew from Ségur, but had no conception of mathematics beyond arithmetic, nor of physics, nor of contemporary literature: in conversation he knew how to be silent, or to utter a few general phrases about Goethe, Schiller, and Byron, but he had never read them. Notwithstanding this classical, French education, of which so few examples are now left, his conversation was always simple, and that simplicity both concealed his ignorance of certain things and showed his good breeding and tolerance. He was a great enemy of all originality, saying that originality is an expedient of ill-bred people. Society was a necessity to him wherever he might be living: alike in Moscow or abroad he always lived in the same open fashion and on certain days received the whole town. His footing in the town was such that an invitation from him would serve as passport to every drawing-room, that many young and pretty women willingly offered him their rosy cheeks, which he kissed as it were paternally, and that some apparently very important and well-bred people were indescribably delighted when admitted to his receptions.

There were few people left to the prince who, like grandmamma, belonged to the same set as he, had been brought up in the same way, had the same outlook on things and were of the same age; so he particularly valued his old friendship with her and always showed her great respect.

I could not take my eyes off the prince: the respect everybody paid him, his large epaulettes, the particular pleasure grandmamma showed on seeing him, and the fact that apparently he alone was not afraid of her, was quite at his ease with her, and even had the courage to call her *ma cousine*, inspired me with the same—if not with greater—respect for him, that I had for her. When my verses were shown him, he called me to him and said:

'Who knows, *ma cousine*, perhaps he will be a second Derzhávin.'

Saying this he pinched my cheek so painfully that if I did not scream it was only because I guessed it was meant as a caress.

The callers had gone away. Papa and Volódya left the room: only the prince, grandmamma, and I remained in the drawing-room.

'But why has our dear Natálya Nikolávna not come?' prince Iván Ivánovich suddenly asked, after a momentary pause.

'Ah, *mon cher*,' answered grandmamma lowering her voice and putting her hand on the sleeve of his uniform, 'she would certainly have come had she been free to do as she pleases. She writes as if Pierre had proposed her coming but that she herself declined because, as she says, they had no income at all this year; and she adds: "Besides, there is no reason why I should come with the whole household to Moscow this year. I.yúba is still too young, and as for the boys who will be living with you, I shall feel even more secure about them than if they were with me." All this is very nice!' continued grandmamma in a tone that clearly showed she did not think it nice at all. 'It was high time to send the boys here so that they might learn something and get used to the world, for what kind of education could they get in the country . . .? Why the eldest is nearly thirteen, and the other eleven. You have noticed, *mon cousin*, that they are quite like savages here . . . they don't even know how to enter a room.'

'But I don't understand these continual complaints about the derangement of their affairs,' remarked the prince. 'He has a very good property, and I know Natálya's Khabárovka (where in days gone by you and I used to act in private theatricals) like my own five fingers: it is a wonderful estate, and must always bring in a splendid income. . . .'

'I will tell you as a true friend,' grandmamma interrupted him with a sad expression on her face, 'that it seems to me that these are only excuses for *him* to live here alone, to frequent clubs and dinners and do heaven knows what, and she does not suspect anything. You know her angelic goodness—she trusts *him* in everything. He has assured her that the children ought to be taken to Moscow and that she ought to remain alone in the country with the stupid governess—and she believes it. If he were to tell her that the children should be whipped as Princess Kornakova whips her children, I think she would agree even to that,' said grandmamma, turning in her armchair with an expression of utter contempt. 'Yes, my dear friend,' she continued after a moment's pause, and taking one of her two handkerchiefs to wipe away a tear that had showed itself, 'I often think that *he* can neither appreciate nor understand her, and that in spite of all her goodness, her love for him, and her desire to hide her sorrows—I know that very well—she cannot be happy with him. Mark my words, if he doesn't . . .'

Grandmamma covered her face with her handkerchief.

'*Eh, ma bonne amie!*' said the prince, reproachfully, 'I see you have not grown a bit more reasonable—you are always distressing yourself and weeping over imaginary ills. Aren't you ashamed? I have known *him* a long time, and know him to be an attentive, kindly, and excellent husband, and above all a most honourable man, *un parfait honnête homme*.'

Having involuntarily overheard a conversation I was not meant to hear, I slipped out of the room on tiptoe, in great agitation.

## XIX

## THE ÍVINS

‘VOIÓDYA! Volódya! The Ívins!’ I cried, when I saw through the window three boys in blue overcoats with beaver collars, who, following a smart young tutor, were crossing from the opposite pavement to our house.

The Ívins were relations of ours and almost of the same age as we, and soon after our arrival in Moscow we had made their acquaintance and become friends.

The second Ívin, Serezha, was a dark curly-haired boy with a firm, turned-up little nose, very fresh red lips that seldom entirely closed over his rather prominent white upper teeth, beautiful dark-blue eyes, and an unusually lively face. He never smiled, but either looked perfectly serious or laughed wholeheartedly, a ringing, resonant, and very captivating laugh. His original beauty struck me at first sight. I felt irresistibly attracted to him. To see him was sufficient to make me happy, and at one time the whole strength of my soul was concentrated on that desire. When I did not see him for three or four days I began to fret, and felt sad enough to cry. All my dreams, waking or sleeping, were of him: when I went to bed I wished to dream of him; when I closed my eyes I saw him before me, and cherished that vision as my greatest happiness. I could not have confided that feeling to any one, so precious was it to me. Perhaps because he was tired of feeling my eyes continually fixed upon him, or simply because he did not feel at all drawn towards me, he evidently preferred to play and talk with Volódya rather than with me, but for all that I was quite content, wished for nothing, demanded nothing, and was ready to sacrifice everything for him. Besides the passionate fascination he had for me, his presence

aroused another feeling in me not less strongly—the fear of grieving him, offending, or displeasing him in any way. Perhaps because his face had a haughty expression, or because despising my own looks, I attached too great a value to beauty in others, or still more probably, because it is a certain characteristic of love, I feared him as much as I loved him. The first time Serezha spoke to me I was so confused by such unexpected happiness that I turned pale, blushed, and could not reply. He had the bad habit, when thinking of something, of fixing his eyes on one spot and continually blinking while twitching his nose and eyebrows. Everybody thought that this habit greatly spoilt his looks, but I thought it so charming that I involuntarily began to do the same thing, and a few days after we got to know him, grandmamma asked me whether my eyes ached, as I was blinking like a tawny owl. No word of affection ever passed between us, but he felt his power over me and in our childish intercourse used it unconsciously but tyrannically; while I, much as I wanted to tell him all that was in my soul, was too much afraid of him to venture to be frank, tried to seem indifferent, and uncomplainingly submitted to him. At times his influence seemed hard and unbearable to me, but to escape it was beyond my power.

It is sad to think of that fresh, beautiful feeling of unselfish and unbounded affection which died without finding vent or being reciprocated.

It is strange how when a child I tried to be like a grown-up, and how since I have ceased to be a child I often wish to be like one. How often that wish—not to be childish in my relations to Serézha—checked the feeling that was ready to burst forth, and caused me to play the hypocrite. I not only dared not kiss him, much as I often wished to do, or to take his hand and tell him how glad I was to see him, but I dared not even call him by his pet name, Serézha.



but only Sergéy—such was our established custom. Every expression of feeling seemed a proof of childishness, and any one who was guilty of it was still a *little boy*. Without yet having had those bitter experiences which lead grown-up people to be cautious and cold in their relations to one another, we deprived ourselves of the pure joys of a tender, child-like attachment, merely from a strange desire to be like *grown-ups*.

I met the Ívins in the hall, greeted them, and rushed headlong to grandmamma, and informed her that the Ívins had come, in a tone suggesting that this announcement must make her perfectly happy. Then I followed Serezhka into the drawing-room without taking my eyes off him, and watched his every movement. When grandmamma said that he had grown a great deal, and fixed her penetrating eyes on him, I experienced the same sense of fear and hope as an artist must feel when awaiting the verdict of a revered judge on his work.

The Ívins' young tutor, Herr Frost, with grandmamma's permission went out into the garden with us, seated himself on a green bench, gracefully crossed his legs and, placing his bronze-headed stick between them, lit a cigar with the air of one highly satisfied with what he is doing.

Herr Frost was a German, but a German of quite a different type to our good Karl Iványch. In the first place he spoke Russian correctly and French with a bad accent, and, especially among the ladies, generally enjoyed the reputation of being a very learned man. Secondly, he had red moustaches, wore a large ruby pin in his black-satin cravat the ends of which were tucked under his braces, and trousers of light blue shot material, with straps. Thirdly, he was young, had a handsome self-satisfied appearance, and unusually fine muscular legs. It was evident that he particularly prized this last advantage, considered

its effect on the female sex irresistible, and no doubt with this in view tried to place his legs in the most noticeable position, and whether standing or sitting always made his calves twitch. He was a typical young Russo-German who wants to be a dashing fellow and a lady-killer.

We had great fun in the garden. The game of robbers was going on in the best possible way; but an incident occurred that nearly stopped it altogether. Serezha was a robber: rushing after the travellers he stumbled and struck his knee full tilt against a tree with such force that I thought he had splintered it. Though I was a constable and it was my duty to catch him, I went up to him and asked, with concern, if he was hurt. Serezha got angry with me; clenched his fists, stamped his foot, and in a voice clearly showing he was in great pain, shouted:

‘What are you about? How can one play like that! Why don’t you catch me?’ he repeated several times, with a side glance at Volódya and the eldest Ívin, who represented the travellers and ran skipping along the path; then with a sudden yell, he rushed after them with a loud laugh.

I cannot express how impressed and enthralled I was by his heroic behaviour: in spite of terrible pain he not only did not cry, but did not even show that he was hurt, and did not for a moment forget the game.

Soon after that, when Ílinka Grap joined us and we went upstairs before dinner, Serezha had occasion still further to captivate and impress me by his remarkable courage and firmness of character.

Ílinka Grap was the son of a poor foreigner who had once lived at my grandfather’s and was under some obligation to him, and now considered it his duty to send his son to us as often as possible. If he thought his son could derive any honour or pleasure from intercourse with us he was quite mistaken, for not

merely were we not friendly with Ílinka, but we only noticed him when we wanted to make fun of him. Ílinka Grap was a boy of about thirteen, thin, tall, and pale, with a bird-like face and a good-natured submissive expression. He was very poorly dressed, but his hair was so thickly pomaded that we maintained that on sunny days the pomatum melted on his head and trickled down under his jacket. When I now remember him, I find that he was a very obliging, quiet, and kind lad, but then he seemed to me such a contemptible creature that he was not worth pitying or even thinking about.

When we had finished playing at robbers, we went upstairs and began to romp and show off our gymnastic feats to one another. Ílinka watched us with a timid smile of wonder and, when invited to do the same, made excuses saying that he had no strength at all. Serezha was wonderfully charming: he took off his jacket, his face and eyes shone, he laughed, and continually devised new tricks: he jumped over three chairs placed side by side, turned somersaults the whole length of the room, stood on his head on Tatíshchev's dictionaries which he had placed in the middle of the room for a pedestal, and did such funny things with his feet that it was impossible to keep from laughing. After this last trick he thought for a bit, winked, and with a perfectly serious air suddenly went up to Ílinka and said: 'Try that, it really is not difficult.' Grap, seeing everybody's attention fixed on him, blushed, and in a scarcely audible voice said that he could not possibly do it.

'Now, really, why doesn't he want to show us anything? He's not a girl. . . . He must certainly stand on his head!'

Serēzha took him by the hand.

'Yes, certainly, certainly, on his head!' we all cried, surrounding Ílinka, who at that moment evidently became frightened and grew pale, seizing

him by the arms and dragging him towards the dictionaries.

'Let me go, I'll do it myself! You'll tear my jacket!' cried the unfortunate victim. But those cries of despair increased our animation. We were dying with laughter: his green jacket was bursting at all its seams.

Volódya and the eldest Ívin bent his head down and placed it on the dictionaries, and Serezhka and I seized the poor boy by his thin legs, which he was kicking in all directions, turned up his trousers to the knees, and with loud laughter jerked them upwards, while the youngest Ívin kept the whole body balanced.

It so happened that after our boisterous laughter we all suddenly became silent, and it was so quiet in the room that the only sound heard was the heavy breathing of the unfortunate Grap. At that moment I did not feel quite convinced that all this was funny and amusing.

'Well, now you're a brick!' said Volódya, giving him a slap.

Ílinka remained silent and, trying to free himself, kicked his legs in all directions. In one of these desperate movements his heel struck Serèzha in the eye so severely that he immediately let go of the legs, put one hand to his eye which was shedding involuntary tears, and pushed Ílinka with all his might. No longer supported by us, Ílinka fell on the floor like a lifeless mass, and could only mutter through his tears:

'Why do you torment me?'

We were struck by the pitiful figure of poor Ílinka with his tear-stained face, tangled hair, and turned-up trousers, below which one saw the unblackened tops of his boots. We were all silent and tried to force a smile.

The first to recover was Serèzha.

'There's an old woman! Cry-baby!' he said, lightly touching Ílinka with his foot. 'One can't have a joke with him. . . . Enough now, get up!'

'I told you you are a good-for-nothing boy!' said Ílinka angrily and, turning away, he sobbed aloud.

'Ah, ah! He kicks one with his heels and then calls names!' cried Serëzha, seizing one of the dictionaries and flourishing it over the unfortunate boy, who did not even try to defend himself but only covered his head with his arms.

'Take that and that! . . . Let's leave him alone if he does not understand a joke. . . . Come downstairs,' said Serëzha, laughing unnaturally.

I looked with pity at the poor boy, who lay on the floor and, hiding his face among the dictionaries, wept so that it seemed as if it needed but little more for him to die of the sobs that convulsed his whole body.

'Eh, Sergéy!' I said, 'why did you do that?'

'That's good . . . ! I did not cry, I hope, when I cut my leg nearly to the bone to-day.'

'Yes, that's true,' thought I, 'Ílinka is nothing but a cry-baby, and Serëzha is a brick . . . what a brick he is . . . !'

I did not consider that the poor boy was probably not crying so much from physical pain, as at the thought that five boys whom perhaps he liked, had without any reason conspired to hate and worry him.

I am quite unable to explain the cruelty of my behaviour. Why did I not go up to him, protect, or console him? Where was the feeling of compassion which made me sob at sight of a young jackdaw thrown from its nest, or of the puppy being taken to be thrown over the fence, or of a chicken the scullion was taking to make soup of?

Can it be that this good feeling was stifled by my love of Serëzha and my desire to appear in his eyes

as dashing a fellow as he was himself? Unenviable then was that love, and that wish to appear dashing, for they throw the only dark spots on the pages of my childhood's recollections.

## XX

## VISITORS ARRIVE

JUDGING by the unusual bustle noticeable in the butler's pantry, by the bright illumination which gave a novel and festive appearance to the old familiar objects in the drawing-room and ball-room, and especially by the fact that Prince Iván Ivánovich would not have sent his orchestra without some reason, it seemed that we were to have many guests that evening.

At the sound of each vehicle that passed, I ran to the window, put my hands to my temples and to the window-pane, and peered into the street with impatient curiosity. From the darkness, which at first hid all the objects outside the window, there gradually emerged, just opposite, the familiar little shop over the way with its lamp; diagonally across, the large house with two windows lit up downstairs, and in the middle of the street an open cab with two passengers, or an empty carriage returning at a loo-pace: but at last a carriage drove up to our front door, and feeling sure that it was the Ívins, who had promised to come early, I ran to meet them in the hall. Instead of the Ívins, behind the arm of a livery servant who opened the door, appeared two female persons, one of them tall, in a blue coat with a sable collar, the other small, wrapped up in a green shawl from beneath which one saw only her little feet in fur boots. Without noticing my presence in the hall—though I had thought it my duty to bow to these persons when they came in—the little one went up

to the tall one and stopped in front of her. The tall one unwound the shawl that completely covered the little one's head, unfastened her cloak, and when the liveried footman had received these things into his care and had drawn off her fur boots, the bundled-up person had become a charming, twelve-year-old girl, in a short low-necked muslin frock, white drawers, and tiny black shoes. Round her neck was a black velvet ribbon; her little head was covered with brown curls which suited her beautiful little face so well in front and went so well with her bare shoulders behind, that I should not have believed Karl Iványch himself had he told me that they curled like that because since morning they had been twisted up in bits of the *Moscow News*, and had been pressed with hot iron pincers. It seemed as if she must have been born with that curly head.

The most striking feature of her face was the unusual size of her prominent, half-closed eyes, which formed a strange but pleasing contrast to her tiny mouth. Her lips were closed and the look of her eyes so serious that the general expression of her face was such as caused one not to expect a smile from it, and her smile was therefore all the more enchanting.

Trying not to be noticed, I slipped through the door into the ball-room, and thought it necessary to pace up and down pretending to be wrapped in thought and quite unaware that guests had arrived. When they were half-way through the room I, as it were, came to myself, bowed, brought my feet together, and informed them that grandmamma was in the drawing-room. Madame Valákhina, whose face I liked very much, especially as I found in it a great resemblance to that of her daughter, Sónya, nodded to me graciously.

Grandmamma seemed very pleased to see Sónya, made her come up closer, arranged a curl that fell over her forehead, and looking intently into her face,

said: '*Quelle charmante enfant!*'<sup>1</sup> Sónya smiled, blushed, and seemed so charming that, looking at her, I too blushed.

'I hope you won't find it dull in my house, my dear,' said grandmamma, raising Sónya's face by the chin. 'Please amuse yourself and dance as much as possible. We have one lady and two gentlemen already,' she added, turning to Madame Valákhina and touching me with her hand.

This association so pleased me that I blushed again.

Feeling my shyness increasing and hearing another carriage drive up, I thought it best to retire. In the hall I found Princess Kornakóva with her son and an incredible number of daughters, who all looked alike, resembled their mother, and were all plain, so that not one of them drew my attention. As they took off their coats and boas they all talked together in thin voices, bustled about and laughed at something—probably at there being so many of them. Etienne was a boy of about fifteen, tall, fleshy, with a wash-out face, sunken eyes with blue shadows under them, and with, for his age, enormous hands and feet; he was awkward, had an unpleasant, breaking voice, but seemed very well satisfied with himself and was exactly what, to my ideas, a boy who was beaten with rods would be.

We stood for some time facing and scrutinizing each other without saying a word; then we drew nearer and, I think, meant to kiss, but after looking in one another's eyes, we somehow changed our minds. When the dresses of all his sisters had rustled past us, in order to start a conversation I asked whether they had not been crowded in their carriage.

'I don't know,' he answered carelessly. 'You see I never go in the carriage, because as soon as I get in I become sick, and mamma knows that. When we

<sup>1</sup> What a charming child.



go anywhere in the evening I always sit on the box—it is much more amusing, one sees everything. Philip lets me drive, and sometimes I take the whip. And sometimes those that drive by get a taste of it—he made an expressive gesture. ‘It’s fine!’

‘Your excellency!’ said a footman, coming into the hall, ‘Philip wants to know where you have put the whip.’

‘Put the whip? Why, I gave it back to him.’

‘He says you didn’t.’

‘Well then, I hung it on the lamp.’

‘Philip says it is not on the lamp either. . . . You’d better admit that you took it and lost it, and Philip will have to pay out of his own money for your pranks,’ continued the angry footman, becoming more and more animated.

The footman, who looked a respectable and stern man, seemed to take Philip’s part very warmly and to be determined to clear the matter up. From an instinctive feeling of delicacy I stepped aside as if I had not noticed anything, but the footmen present acted quite differently: they came nearer and looked approvingly at the old servant.

‘Well, if it ’s lost, it ’s lost!’ said Etienne, trying to avoid further explanations. ‘What the whip costs I’ll pay. Isn’t it ridiculous?’ he added, coming up to me and taking me towards the drawing-room.

‘No, allow me, sir. . . . How will you pay? I know how you pay. For seven months you have been going to pay Márya Vasilyevna her twenty kopeks, and me, for over a year I think, and Petrúshka . . .’

‘Will you hold your tongue?’ shouted the young prince, growing pale with anger: ‘see if I don’t tell it all.’

‘Tell it all, tell it all!’ muttered the footman. ‘It ’s not right, your excellency!’ he added with particular significance as we entered the ball-room, and he went to put the cloaks on the settee.

'That 's right, that 's right!' came an approving voice from the hall.

Grandmamma had a peculiar gift for expressing her opinion of people by addressing them, either in the second person singular or the second person plural, in a special tone and in special circumstances. Though she often used the pronouns 'thou' and 'you' inversely to the way usually accepted, these distinctions assumed quite a special significance on her lips. When the young prince approached her she said a few words to him, calling him 'you', and glanced at him with such a look of contempt that I in his place should have been quite confused, but Etienne was evidently not a boy of that make: he not only did not take any notice of grandmamma's reception of him, but even took none of her, and bowed to the whole company, if not gracefully at least with complete ease.

Sónya absorbed my whole attention: I remembered that when Volódyá, Etienne, and I, were talking in a part of the ball-room from which I could see Sónya and she could see and hear us, I spoke with pleasure; and when I happened to say anything that seemed to me smart or amusing, I said it in a louder tone and looked towards the drawing-room door, but when we moved to a place where we could not be heard or seen from the drawing-room, I was silent and took no further pleasure in the conversation.

The drawing and ball-rooms gradually filled with guests; among them, as always happens at children's parties, were some grown-up children who did not wish to miss an occasion for amusing themselves and dancing, while pretending to do so only to please the hostess.

When the Ívins arrived, instead of the pleasure it generally gave me to meet Serezha I felt strangely vexed with him, because he would see Sónya and be seen by her.

## XXI

## BEFORE THE MAZURKA

'Ah, you are having some dancing, I see,' said Serezhka, as he came out of the drawing-room and drew a pair of new kid gloves from his pocket. 'I must put on my gloves.'

'What is to be done? We have no gloves,' thought I. 'I must go upstairs and have a search.'

'However, though I rummaged through all the drawers, I only found our green travelling mittens in one, and in another a kid glove which could not be of use to me—in the first place because it was exceedingly old and dirty, secondly because it was too large for me, and above all because the middle finger was lacking, having no doubt long ago been cut off by Karl Iványch for a sore finger. I put on the remains of that glove however, and attentively examined that part of my middle finger which was always ink-stained.

'Now if Natálya Savíshna were here she would probably find some gloves. I can't go downstairs like this, because if they ask me why I don't dance, what can I say? Nor can I stay here, for they are sure to miss me. What am I to do?' said I, waving my arms.

'What are you doing here?' asked Volódya. 'Go and engage a lady: they are just going to begin.'

'Volódya,' I said, showing him my hand with two fingers sticking out of the dirty glove, and speaking in a voice that expressed a state bordering on despair, 'Volódya, you have not thought of this!'

'Of what?' he asked impatiently. 'Oh, about gloves!' he added, quite indifferently, when he noticed my hand. 'Quite true, we have not. We must ask gran'mamma and see what she will say,' and without further consideration he ran downstairs.

The coolness with which he treated a matter that had seemed to me so vital calmed me, and I hurried to the drawing-room quite forgetting the horrid glove I had on my left hand.

Having come softly up to grandmamma's chair and lightly touched her mantilla, I whispered:

'Grandmamma, what are we to do? We have no gloves!'

'What, my dear?'

'We have no gloves,' I repeated, coming closer and closer and putting both my hands on the arm of her chair.

'And what is that?' she said, suddenly seizing my left hand. '*Voyez, ma chère,*' she went on, turning to Madame Valákhina, '*voyez comme ce jeune homme s'est fait élégant pour dancier avec votre fille.*'<sup>1</sup>

Grandmamma held my hand firmly and looked seriously but inquiringly at everybody present until the curiosity of all the visitors was satisfied and the laughter had become general.

I should have been much mortified had Serézha seen me as, shrinking with shame, I vainly tried to pull away my hand, but I did not feel at all confused before Sónya, who laughed so that her eyes filled with tears and all the ringlets shook round her flushed face. I understood that her laughter was too loud and too natural to be ironical; on the contrary, the fact that we laughed together and looked at one another seemed to draw us nearer together. The episode with the glove, though it might have ended badly, brought me this advantage, that it put me on an easy footing in the circle which always seemed to me most terrible—the drawing-room circle. In the ball-room I no longer felt at all shy.

The sufferings of shy people arise from their uncertainty as to what opinion has been formed about

<sup>1</sup> Look, my dear, see how elegant this young man has made himself to dance with your daughter.

them. As soon as that opinion is clearly expressed (be it what it may) the suffering ceases.

What made Sónya so charming when she danced the French quadrille opposite me with the clumsy young prince? How sweetly she smiled when she gave me her hand in the *chaîne*! How charmingly the brown curls on her head jerked in time with the music, how naively she made the *jeté-assemblé* with her tiny feet! In the fifth figure, when my lady ran from me to the opposite side, and I, waiting for the beat, was preparing to do my solo, Sónya compressed her lips seriously and looked the other way. But she need not have been afraid on my account: I boldly made the *chassé en avant*, *chassé en arrière*, *glissade*, and, as I approached her, playfully showed her the glove with the fingers sticking out. She burst into a loud laugh and tripped still more charmingly over the parquet. Another thing I remember when we all took hands to form a ring, is her bending her head and without letting go of my hand rubbing her little nose with her glove. I can see it all now and can still hear the music of the quadrille from 'The Maid of the Danube' to the sounds of which all this took place.

Then came a second quadrille, which I danced with Sónya. On sitting down by her side I felt extremely ill at ease and did not at all know what to talk to her about. When my silence was becoming too prolonged I began to chatter, for fear she should take me for a fool, and I determined at any cost to prevent her making such a mistake about me. '*Vous êtes une habitante de Moscou.*'<sup>1</sup> I asked, and having received an affirmative reply continued: '*Et moi, je n'ai encore jamais fréquenté la capitale,*'<sup>2</sup> replying particularly on the effect of the word *fréquenté*. I felt however that though this beginning was very brilliant

<sup>1</sup> Are you an inhabitant of Moscow?

<sup>2</sup> And I have never before frequented the capital.

and fully proved my thorough knowledge of French, I could not keep up a conversation in that strain. It would be some time before it would be our turn to dance, and the silence was renewed. I looked at her uneasily, anxious to know what impression I had made on her and expecting her to help me. 'Where did you find such a comical glove?' she suddenly asked: that question gave me great pleasure and I explained that the glove belonged to Karl Ivánvch, and dilated, even rather ironically, on his personality—how funny he looked when he lifted his red cap, and how, in his green overcoat, he once fell off a horse straight into a puddle, and so on. I did not know how the quadrille passed. This was all very well—but why did I speak ironically of Karl Ivánvch? Should I really have forfeited Sónya's good opinion had I described him to her with the affection and respect I really felt for him?

When the quadrille was over, Sónya said *merci* to me with as sweet an expression as though I had really deserved her gratitude. I was in ecstasy—beside myself with joy—and could not recognize myself: from whence had I gained this courage, self-assurance, and even audacity? 'Nothing can abash me!' I thought, striding carelessly about the ball-room. 'I am ready for anything.'

Serczha asked me to be his *vis-à-vis*. 'All right,' I said, 'though I have no partner, I will find one.' Glancing round the room with a determined look, I saw that all the ladies were engaged except one grown-up girl who was standing at the drawing-room door. A tall young man was just approaching her with the intention, I concluded, of inviting her to dance: he was only a couple of steps from her, and I at the other end of the room. In a twinkling I flew across the distance between us gliding gracefully over the parquet, and clicking my feet together asked her in a firm voice for the next quadrille. The grown-up

girl, smiling condescendingly, gave me her hand and the young man was left without a partner.

I felt such a consciousness of my strength that I did not even take any notice of the young man's annoyance; but I heard afterwards that he had asked who was that rough-headed boy who had darted past him and snatched away his lady from under his nose.

## XXII

## THE MAZURKA

THE young man whom I had deprived of his partner was leading, in the first pair of the mazurka. He jumped up from his seat and holding his partner's hand, instead of doing the *pas de Basques* which Mimi had taught us, simply ran across the room and on reaching the corner stopped, spread his legs, struck the floor with his heel, turned, and ran on again with a spring.

As I had no partner for the mazurka, I sat behind grandmamma's high-backed chair and watched.

'Whatever is he doing?' I asked myself. 'That's not at all what Mimi taught us: she always assured us that everybody danced the mazurka on their toes, moving their feet smoothly in a semi-circle; and it turns out it's not danced that way at all. There are the Ivins and Etienne all dancing, and not doing the *pas de Basques*, and our Volódya has also picked up this new way. It's not bad . . . ! And Sónya—what a darling! There she goes . . . ' I felt extremely happy.

The mazurka was nearing its end: some of the older men and women came up to say good-bye to grandmamma and went away. Footmen, carefully avoiding the dancers, were carrying the supper things into the back rooms. Grandmamma was evidently tired and spoke as if reluctantly, in a very

drawling tone; the band began lazily playing the same tune for the thirtieth time. The grown-up girl with whom I had danced noticed me as she was dancing one of the figures, and with a treacherous smile—probably wishing thereby to please grandmamma—led Sónya and one of the innumerable princesses up to me. '*Rose ou hortie?*'<sup>1</sup> she asked.

'Oh, you are here!' said grandmamma, turning round in her chair. 'Well, go, my dear, go.'

Although I felt at that moment more like hiding my head under grandmamma's chair than coming out from behind it, how could I refuse? I got up, said '*Rose*', and glanced timidly at Sónya. Before I could recover myself some one's white-gloved hand was in mine, and the princess darted forward with the pleasantest smile, not in the least suspecting that I did not at all know what to do with my feet.

I knew that the *pas de Basques* was out of place, unsuitable, and might even put me completely to shame, but the familiar sounds of the mazurka, acting on my hearing, communicated a familiar movement to my acoustic nerves which in turn passed it on to my feet; and these, quite involuntarily, and to the surprise of the beholders, began to evolve the fatal, circular and gliding steps on the toes. As long as we went straight ahead things were not too bad, but at the turn I noticed that unless I took care I should certainly get in front of my partner. To avoid such an unpleasantness I stopped, intending to make the same kind of figure that the young man in the first couple had executed so beautifully. But just at the moment when I separated my feet and was about to spring, the princess, circling quickly round me, looked at my feet with an expression of blank surprise and curiosity. This look did for me! I was so confused that, instead of dancing, I began stamping my feet on one spot in the strangest way, neither in time nor in accord with

<sup>1</sup> Rose or nettle?



anything, and at last stopped altogether. Everybody looked at me, some with surprise, some with curiosity, some with derision, and others with commiseration; only grandmamma looked on with complete indifference.

*'Il ne fallait pas danser, si vous ne savez pas!'*<sup>1</sup> said papa's angry voice just above my ear, and slightly pushing me aside, he took my partner's hand and danced a turn with her in the old-fashioned way and to the loud applause of the onlookers led her back to her seat. The mazurka at once came to an end.

'Oh Lord! Why dost Thou punish me so dreadfully . . .?'

'Everybody despises and always will despise me. . . . Every road is closed to me—the road to friendship, to love, to honour . . . all is lost! Why did Volódya make signs to me, which everybody saw and which could not be of use? Why did that disgusting princess look so at my feet? Why did Sónya . . . she is a darling . . . but why did she smile just then? Why did papa blush and seize my arm? Can even he have been ashamed of me? Oh, it is terrible! Now if mamma had been here, she would not have blushed for her Nicholas . . . ' And my imagination carried me far away after that dear vision. I recalled the meadow in front of the house, the tall lime-trees in the garden, the clear pond over which the swallows circled, the azure sky with motionless transparent clouds, the fragrant heaps of new-mown hay, and many other peaceful and bright memories floated through my distracted imagination.

<sup>1</sup> You should not dance if you do not know how.

## XXIII

## AFTER THE MAZURKA

AT supper the young man who had danced in the first couple in the mazurka seated himself at our children's table and directed his attention particularly to me, which would have flattered my self-esteem had I been able to feel anything after the misfortune that had befallen me. But the young man seemed anxious to cheer me up at any cost; he joked with me, called me a fine fellow, and when none of the grown-ups were looking poured wine into my glass from different bottles, and insisted that I should drink it. Towards the end of supper when the butler had only filled my glass a quarter full from the bottle wrapped in a table-napkin, the young man insisted on its being filled right up, and made me empty it at a draught; I felt a pleasant warmth through my whole body, a particular friendliness for my merry protector, and for some reason I burst into loud laughter.

Suddenly the sounds of the *Grossvater* resounded from the ball-room and everybody rose from table. My friendship with the young man came to a sudden end: he joined the grown-up people and I, not daring to follow him, went up and listened with curiosity to what Madame Valákhina and her daughter were saying.

'Just half an hour longer!' Sónya was saying persuasively.

'We really musn't, my angel.'

'Do, for my sake, please,' Sónya went on caressingly.

'And will you be pleased if I am ill to-morrow?' said Madame Valákhina and had the imprudence to smile.

'Ah, you agree! We shall stay?' cried Sónya, jumping with joy.

'What is one to do with you? Well, go and dance,

and here is a cavalier for you,' said her mother, pointing to me.

Sónya gave me her hand and we ran into the ball-room.

The wine I had drunk and Sónya's presence and high spirits, made me quite forget the unfortunate incident of the mazurka. I did most amusing things with my feet; now imitating a horse I ran at a trot proudly lifting my feet, then I stood stamping on one spot like a ram angry with a dog, and laughed heartily, not at all concerned about the impression I was creating on those who saw me. Sónya also laughed incessantly; she laughed at our holding each other's hands and circling round and round; she laughed at an elderly gentleman who slowly lifted his feet to step over a handkerchief, pretending that this was very hard for him to do, and she nearly died with laughter when I almost jumped to the ceiling to show my agility.

Passing through grandmamma's boudoir I looked at myself in the mirror. My face was all in perspiration, my hair untidy, the tufts sticking up more than ever, but the general expression of my face was so happy, good-natured, and healthy, that I was pleased with myself.

'If I were always as I am now,' I thought, 'I might yet please others!'

But when I again looked at my partner's lovely face I saw in it besides the brightness, health, and freedom from care that pleased me in my own, so much refined and delicate beauty that I was vexed with myself and saw how foolish it was of me to hope to engage the attention of so wonderful a being.

I could not hope that my feelings would be reciprocated, and did not even think of it, my soul overflowed with happiness even without that. I did not think that for the love that filled my soul with satisfaction I could demand a yet greater happiness,

or desire anything more than that this feeling should never come to an end. I felt happy as it was. My heart fluttered like a dove, the blood rushed to it continually, and I felt ready to weep.

When we were going through the passage past the dark lumber-room under the stairs, I glanced at it and thought what bliss it would be to live in that dark lumber-room with her, nobody knowing that we lived there!

'Don't you think it is very gay to-night?' I asked in a low, trembling voice and walked faster, frightened not so much at what I had said as at what I meant to say.

'Yes . . . very!' she replied, turning her head towards me with such a frankly kind expression that I ceased to fear.

'Especially after supper. . . . But if you knew how sorry'—I wished to say 'grieved' but did not dare to—'I am that you are soon going away and that we shall not see one another again!'

'But why should we not see one another?' she said, gazing intently at the tips of her little shoes, and running her fingers along the trellis screen by which we were passing. 'Every Tuesday and Friday mamma and I drive on the Tverskóy Boulevard. Don't you go for walks?'

'We will certainly ask to go on Tuesday, and if they won't let me I will run away alone—without a cap. I know the way.'

'Do you know what?' Sónya said suddenly, 'I and some boys who visit us, always say *thou* to one another; let us say *thou* to one another too! Dost thou want to?' she added, tossing her head and glancing straight into my eyes.

Just then we were entering the ball-room, and another, livelier, part of the *Grossvater* was beginning.

'Let me . . . with you!' I said while the music and noise were loud enough to drown my voice.

'With *thee*, not with *you*,' Sónya corrected me and burst out laughing.

The *Grossvater* was over, and I had not succeeded in saying a single sentence with 'thou' in it, although I had been trying to compose some in which it would be repeated several times. I lacked courage to do it. 'Dost thou want?' 'With *thee*, not with *you*'—these words resounded in my ears and seemed to intoxicate me: I saw nothing and nobody but Sónya. I saw how they lifted her curls and pushed them behind her ears exposing parts of her forehead and temples which I had not yet seen; I saw how they wrapped her up in the green shawl so closely that the tip of her nose was all one could see, and I noticed that if she had not made a little opening in front of her mouth with her rosy fingers she would certainly have been suffocated, and I saw her follow her mother downstairs, turn round quickly, nod to us, and vanish through the door.

Volódya, the Ívins, the young prince, and I, were all in love with Sónya, and standing at the top of the stairs followed her with our eyes. To whom in particular she nodded I do not know, but at that moment I was firmly convinced that it was to me.

When saying good-bye to the Ívins, I spoke to Serezhka in a free and easy and even rather cold manner and shook hands with him. If he understood that from that day he had lost my affection and his power over me, he was probably sorry, but he tried to appear perfectly indifferent.

For the first time in my life I had been faithless in love, and for the first time I felt the sweetness of that sensation. I was glad to exchange the worn-out feeling of habitual devotion, for the fresh sentiment of love full of mystery and uncertainty. Besides, to cease to love and to begin to love anew at the same time, is to begin to love twice as much as before.

## XXIV

### IN BED

'How could I have loved Serezha so passionately and so long?' I wondered as I lay in bed. 'No, he never understood, could not value, and was not worthy of, my love. But Sónya. . . . What a darling! "Dost thou want?" "It is for thee to begin." . . .'

I jumped up on all fours, vividly picturing her face to myself, then covered my head with the bed-clothes, tucked them under me all round and when there was no opening left settled down and, conscious of a pleasant warmth, fell into sweet dreams and memories. Fixing my eyes on the lining of my quilt I saw her as clearly as I had done an hour before. I even conversed with her in my mind, and this conversation, though quite senseless, gave me indescribable pleasure because the words *thou*, *to thee*, *with thee*, and *thy* continually occurred in it.

These dreams were so distinct that I was kept awake by the sweet excitement, and wished to share the excess of my happiness with some one.

'Darling!' I said almost aloud, turning abruptly on my side. 'Volódya, are you asleep?'

'No,' he answered in a sleepy voice. 'Why?'

'I am in love, Volódya, decidedly in love with Sónya.'

'Well, what of it?' he replied, stretching himself.

'Oh, Volódya, you can't imagine what is happening to me . . . I was lying wrapped in my quilt just now and saw her and talked to her so clearly, so clearly, that it was quite astonishing. And then, do you know, when I lie thinking of her, goodness only knows why, I feel sad and want awfully to cry.'

Volódya moved a little.

'I only wish for one thing,' I continued, 'to be always with her, always to see her, and nothing more. Are you in love? Own up frankly, Volódya.'

It was strange that I wished every one to be in love with Sónya and every one to speak about it.

'What business is it of yours?' said Volódya, turning his face to me. 'Perhaps!'

'You don't want to sleep, you only pretended!' I exclaimed, seeing by his bright eyes that he had no thought of sleep, and I threw off my quilt. 'Let's rather talk about her. Isn't she charming . . .? So charming that if she said, "Nicholas, jump out of the window!" or "Throw yourself into the fire!" I swear I would do it at once and gladly. Oh, how charming!' I added, vividly imagining her before me, and in order thoroughly to enjoy the picture suddenly turning on my other side and pushing my head under the pillow. 'I want awfully to cry, Volódya.'

'There's a fool!' said he smiling, and after a short pause, said:

'I don't feel like you at all. I think, if it were possible, I should like first to sit beside her and talk . . .'

'Ah! Then you are in love too?' I interrupted him.

'Then,' Volódya went on, smiling tenderly, 'then I would kiss her little fingers, her eyes, lips, nose, her feet—and the whole of her!'

'Nonsense!' I cried out from under my pillow.

'You don't understand anything!' said Volódya contemptuously.

'Yes, I understand; it's you who don't understand and talk nonsense,' I said through my tears.

'Anyhow there is no reason at all for you to cry. A regular girl!'

## XXV

### THE LETTER

ON the 16th of April, nearly six months after the day I have just described, papa came upstairs while we were having lessons, and told us that we were going to the country with him that night. Something

caused my heart to sink at this news, and my thoughts at once turned to mamma.

The cause of such an unexpected departure was the following letter:

‘Petróvskoe. 12th April.

‘Only now, at ten o’clock in the evening, have I received your kind letter of April 3rd and as usual I answer it at once. Fëdor brought it from town yesterday, but as it was late he did not give it to Mimi till this morning. Mimi however did not give it to me all day on the pretext that I was not well and upset. It is true I have been a little feverish, and to confess the truth this is the fourth day I have not been very well and have not got up.

‘Please don’t be frightened, dearest: I am feeling pretty well and, if Iván Vasilych allows, I hope to get up to-morrow.

‘Last Friday I went for a drive with the children, but just at the turning on to the high road, near that little bridge which always terrified me, the horses stuck in the mud. It was a lovely day and I thought I would walk to the high road while the carriage was being extricated. On reaching the chapel I felt very tired and sat down to rest, and as it was half an hour before people came to pull out the carriage, I began to feel cold, especially my feet, as my boots were thin and I had got them wet through. After dinner I felt a chill and was hot, but went about as usual and after tea sat down to play duets with Lyúba. (You would hardly know her, she has made such progress!). But fancy my surprise when I found that I could not count the beats. Several times I began to count, but everything in my head was quite confused and there were strange noises in my ears. I counted one, two, three, and then suddenly: eight, fifteen, and above all I was conscious of talking nonsense and could not correct myself. At last Mimi came to my



aid and put me to bed almost by force. There, my dear one, you have a full account of how I fell ill and how it was my own fault. Next day my temperature was rather high and our dear old Iván Vasílych came and has stayed with us ever since, but promises soon to let me out into God's fresh air. A splendid old man Iván Vasílych is! When I was feverish and delirious he sat all night by my bedside not closing his eyes; and now, as he knows I am writing, he is in the sitting-room with the little girls, and I can hear from my bedroom how he tells them German fairy tales, and how they almost die with laughter listening to him.

'*La belle Flamande*, as you call her, is staying with us since last week because her mother has gone away somewhere on a visit, and by her care of me she shows her sincere attachment. She confides all her secrets to me. With her beautiful face, her kind heart, and her youth, she might become in all respects a fine young woman were she in good hands; but in the society in which she lives, judging by her own accounts, she will be completely ruined. It came into my head that, if I had not so many children of my own, I should do a good deed by adopting her.

'Lyúba meant to write to you herself, but has torn up three sheets of paper already. She says: "I know what a tease papa is: if I make a single little mistake he will show it to everybody." Kátya is as sweet as ever, and Mimi as kind and as tiresome.

'Now let us talk seriously: you write that your affairs are not going well this winter and that you will have to take the Khabárovka money. It seems strange to me even that you should ask my consent to that. Does not what belongs to me belong equally to you?

'You are so kind, my dear one, that for fear of paining me you hide the actual state of your affairs, but I can guess: no doubt you have lost a great deal

at cards, and I assure you I am not at all grieved about it. So that if the matter can be put right, please don't think much about it and don't worry yourself needlessly. I am accustomed not to count on your winnings for the children, nor, forgive me, even on any of your property. Your winnings give me as little pleasure as your losses grieve me. I am only grieved by your unfortunate passion for gaming which deprives me of a part of your tender attachment, and forces me to tell you such bitter truths as this; and God knows how it hurts me to do so! I never cease praying to Him that He would preserve us—not from poverty (what does poverty matter?) but from that terrible position in which the children's interests, which I should have to defend, would clash with our own. Till now God has heard my prayer: you have not crossed the line beyond which we should have either to sacrifice the property, which no longer belongs to us but to our children, or . . . it is too dreadful even to think of it yet that terrible misfortune is always threatening us. Yes, it is a heavy cross the Lord has laid on us both.

'You also write about the children and return to our discussion of long ago: you ask me to consent to their being sent to school. You know my prejudice against such an education. . . .

'I do not know, dear friend, if you will agree, but in any case I implore you for the sake of our love to promise as long as I live, and after my death if it is God's will to part us, that this shall never happen.

'You write that it is necessary for you to go to Petersburg to see about our affairs. Go, my dearest, may Christ be with you, and return soon. We all feel so dull without you! The spring is wonderfully lovely: the double door of the balcony has already been taken out, the path to the hot-house was already dry four days ago, the peaches are in full blossom; only here and there patches of snow remain; the

swallows have returned; and to-day Lyúba has brought me the first spring flowers. The doctor says that in two or three days' time I shall be quite well again and able to breathe the fresh air and bask a little in the April sun. Good-bye then, my dearest, and please do not worry either about my illness or about your losses; finish your affairs quickly, and come back to us with the children for the whole summer. I am making delightful plans as to how we shall spend it, and only your presence is needed for their realization.'

The following part of the letter was written in French, in an illegible and irregular hand on another scrap of paper. I translate it word for word:

'Don't believe what I have written you about my illness: no one suspects how serious it is. I alone know that I shall never again leave my bed. Do not lose a moment, but come at once and bring the children. Perhaps I may be able to embrace and bless them once more; that is my one last wish. I know what a terrible blow I am inflicting on you, but in any case sooner or later, from me or from others, you would receive it: let us try then to bear this misfortune firmly and with reliance on God's mercy. Let us submit to His will.

'Don't imagine that what I am writing is the delirium of a diseased imagination; on the contrary my thoughts are extremely clear at this moment and I am perfectly calm. Don't comfort yourself with the vain hope that these are the mistaken and vague forebodings of a timid spirit. No, I feel, I know—and I know because it has pleased God to reveal it to me—that I have very little time left to live.

'Will my love for you and the children cease with my life? I have come to understand that this is impossible. I feel too intensely at this moment, to imagine that the feeling without which I cannot understand existence, can ever be annihilated. My

soul cannot exist without love for you, and I know that it will exist for ever if only for the reason that such a feeling as my love could not have arisen had it ever to cease.

'I shall not be with you but I am firmly convinced that my love will never leave you, and this thought is so comforting to my heart that I am at peace and await the approach of death without fear.

'I am at peace, and God knows that I always regarded and still regard death as the passage to a better life; but why do tears choke me? Why must children be deprived of a beloved mother? Why should such a heavy and unexpected blow be dealt to you? Why must I die, when your love made my life so boundlessly happy?

'Let His holy will be done!

'I cannot write more for tears. Maybe I shall not see you again. Thank you, my dear love, for all the happiness with which you have surrounded me in this life; I will pray to God there that He should reward you. Good-bye, dearest friend! Remember that I shall not be, but my love will never leave you anywhere. Good-bye, Volódya, good-bye, my angel! Good-bye, my Benjamin, my Nicholas!

'Can it be that they will ever forget me?"

In this letter was enclosed a note in French from Mimi, the contents of which were as follows:

'The sad presentiments of which she wrote you, have been only too fully confirmed by the doctor. Last night she ordered this letter to be taken to the post at once. Thinking she was delirious when she said it, I waited till this morning and decided to open it. I had hardly broken the seal when Natálya Nikolávna asked me what I had done with the letter, and told me to burn it if it had not yet been posted. She speaks of it continually and assures us that it will kill you. Don't put off your departure if you wish to see that angel before she leaves us. Excuse

this scribble. I have not slept for three nights. You know how I love her!’

Natálya Sávishna who had spent the whole night of April the 11th in our mother’s bedroom, told me that when she had written the first part of the letter, mamma put it near her on the table and fell asleep.

‘I must confess,’ said Natálya Sávishna, ‘that I myself dozed in my chair and my knitting dropped out of my hands. Then (it was some time after midnight) in my sleep I heard a sound as if she were talking. I opened my eyes and looked, and there she was sitting up in bed, my darling, with her hands folded like this, and the tears pouring down in three streams. “So all is finished,” was all she said, and she covered her face with her hands.

‘I jumped up and asked, “What is the matter?”’

‘Oh, Natálya Sávishna, if you only knew whom I have just seen!’

‘However much I asked, she told me nothing more. She only told me to move the little table nearer, then wrote again for a while, told me to seal the letter in her presence and to send it off at once. After that, everything went worse and worse.’

## XXVI

### WHAT AWAITED US IN THE COUNTRY

ON the 25th of April we got out of the carriage at the porch of our Petróvsk house. When we were leaving Moscow papa was preoccupied, and when Volódya asked him whether mamma was ill, papa looked at him sadly and nodded without speaking. During the journey he grew noticeably calmer, but as we drew nearer home his face became more and more mournful, and when getting out of the carriage he asked Fóka, who had run out panting, ‘Where is Natálya Nikolávna?’ his voice was unsteady and there were

tears in his eyes. The good old Fóka glanced stealthily at us, dropping his eyes, and opening the front door, answered with his face turned away:

'This is the sixth day she has not left her bedroom.'

Mílka, who as I learnt later had whined piteously since the day mamma fell ill, rushed joyfully to papa, jumped up on him, and licked his hands with an occasional yelp; but he pushed her aside and passed on to the drawing-room and from there to the sitting-room, the door from which led straight into the bedroom. The nearer he approached that room the more apparent his anxiety became in every movement of his body: on entering the sitting-room he walked on tiptoe, hardly drew breath, and made the sign of the cross before he could bring himself to turn the handle of the door. At that moment Mimi, unkempt and with tearstained face, rushed in from the passage, 'Ah, Peter Alexándrych!' she whispered with an expression of real despair, and then, noticing that papa was turning the door handle, she added almost inaudibly, 'You can't get in here—the way is through the other door.'

Oh, how heavily all this weighed on my childish imagination, attuned to sorrow by terrible forebodings!

We went into the maids' room. In the passage we met fool Akím, who always amused us by his grimaces; but at this moment he not only did not seem funny to me, but nothing struck me so painfully as the look on his senselessly indifferent face. In the maids' room two servants sitting at work rose to greet us with such sad faces that I felt frightened. Passing through Mimi's room, papa opened the bedroom door and we entered. To the right of the door were two windows and they were screened by shawls: at one of these Natálya Sávisna, with her spectacles on her nose, sat knitting a stocking. She did not kiss us as was her wont, but only rose, looked at us through her

spectacles, and her tears fell in streams. I did not at all like the way in which on seeing us everybody immediately began to cry, though they had been calm before.

To the left of the door stood a screen, and behind the screen a bed, a small table, a small medicine-chest, and a large armchair in which the doctor was dozing. Beside the bed stood a very fair, young, and remarkably handsome girl in a white morning gown who, having turned up her sleeves a little, was applying ice to mamma's head. I was unable to see mamma at that moment. This girl was *la belle Flamande* of whom mamma had written, and who later on played so important a part in the life of our whole family. As soon as we entered she drew one hand from mamma's head and arranged the folds of her dress over her bosom, and then said in a whisper: 'Unconscious.'

I was in great distress at that moment but involuntarily noticed every detail. The room was nearly dark, hot, and filled with a mingled odour of mint, eau de Cologne, camomile, and Hoffmann's drops.<sup>1</sup> That smell struck me so that not only when I happen to smell it, but when I even think of it, my imagination immediately carries me back to that dismal and close room and reproduces every minute detail of that terrible moment.

Mamma's eyes were open but she saw nothing. . . . Oh, I shall never forget that awful look! It expressed so much suffering.

We were led away.

When I afterwards asked Natálya Sávishna about my mother's last moments, this is what she told me:

'When they led you away, she, poor birdie, tossed about for a long time as if something were choking her here: then her head slipped off the pillow and

<sup>1</sup> Hoffmann's drops, a medicine in very general use in Russia for generations.

she fell asleep as quietly and peacefully as if she were a heavenly angel. I had just gone out to see why they had not brought her drink—and when I returned she, my sweetheart, had thrown her bedclothes all about, and kept beckoning to your papa. He bent over her but she evidently had not the strength to say what she wanted; as soon as she opened her lips she began moaning: “Oh God! Oh, Lord . . .! The children, the children!” I wanted to run for you, but Iván Vasilych stopped me. He said: “It will only upset her more, better not.” After that she would just raise her hand and drop it again. What she meant by it, God only knows! I think she was blessing you in your absence, but it seems God would not let her see her children before the end. Then she, my dear one, sat up, moved her hands like this, and suddenly spoke, in such a voice that I dare not think of it: “Mother of God, do not desert them . . .!” Just then the pain reached her heart; one could see by her eyes that she suffered dreadfully, poor thing. She fell back on her pillow, seized the sheet with her teeth, and her tears just poured down.’

‘And then?’ I asked.

Natálya could not say any more: she turned away and wept bitterly.

Mamma had died in great agony.

## XXVII

### GRIEF

LATE in the evening of the following day I felt a wish to look at her again. Having mastered an involuntary feeling of dread, I softly opened the door and entered the music-room on tiptoe.

On a table in the middle of the room stood the coffin; around it were candles that had burnt low in their tall, silver candle-sticks; in the far corner of



the room sat the chanter reading the psalter in a soft monotonous voice.

I stopped at the door and looked, but my eyes were so swollen from weeping and my nerves so unstrung that I could not distinguish anything. Everything seemed to run strangely together: the light, the gold brocade, the velvet, the tall candle-sticks, the pink, lace-trimmed pillow, a frontlet, her ribbon-trimmed cap, and something else of a translucent wax-colour. I got up on a chair to look at her face, but in its place I again saw the same pale-yellow, translucent object. I could not believe that it was her face. I gazed at it more intently and little by little began to recognize in it her dear, familiar features. I shuddered with terror when I realized that this was she. But why were the closed eyes so sunken? Why that dreadful pallor and that dark spot under the transparent skin on one of the cheeks? Why was the expression of her whole face so cold and severe? Why were the lips so pale and their shape so beautiful, so majestic, and expressive of such unearthly calm, that a cold shudder ran over my spine and hair when I looked at them?

I gazed, and felt that an incomprehensible, irresistible power drew my eyes to that lifeless face. I did not take my eyes off it, yet my fancy drew pictures of blooming life and happiness. I kept forgetting that the dead body which lay before me, and at which I gazed unreasoningly as at an object that had nothing in common with my memories, was *she*. I imagined her now in one situation and now in another: alive, gay, and smiling; then I was suddenly struck by some feature of the pale face on which my eyes were resting: I recalled the terrible reality and shuddered, but continued to look. And again dreams replaced the reality, and again a consciousness of the reality destroyed the dreams. At last my imagination was tired out, it ceased to deceive me. The

consciousness of the reality also vanished and I became quite unconscious. I do not know how long I remained in that condition, nor what it was; I only know that for a time I ceased to be aware of my existence and experienced a lofty, inexpressibly delightful and sad enjoyment.

Maybe as she flew towards a better world her lovely spirit turned sadly to look at the one in which she had left us; she saw my sorrow, pitied it, and with a heavenly smile of compassion came down to earth on the wings of love to console and bless me.

The door creaked and another chanter entered the room to relieve the first one. The noise roused me, and the first thought that came to me was that, as I was not crying but stood on a chair in an attitude not at all touching, the chanter might take me for a heartless boy who had climbed on to the chair out of pity or curiosity; and I made the sign of the cross, bowed, and began to cry.

Recalling my impression of that time I find that only that momentary self-forgetfulness was true grief. Before and after the funeral I did not cease crying and felt sad, but I am ashamed to remember that sadness, for it was always mingled with some selfish feeling: now a desire to show that I grieved more than any one else, now anxiety as to the effect I was producing on others, now an aimless curiosity, which made me observe Mimi's cap or the faces of those present. I despised myself because I did not experience exclusively a feeling of sorrow, and I tried to conceal all other feelings: this made my grief insincere and unnatural. Besides this I felt a kind of enjoyment at knowing myself to be unhappy, and tried to stimulate my consciousness of unhappiness, and this egotistic feeling, more than any other, stifled real sorrow in me.

Having slept soundly and calmly that night, as is always the case after great distress, I awoke with my

eyes dry and my nerves soothed. At ten o'clock we were called to the service, which was held before the coffin was carried out. The room was filled with domestic and peasant serfs, who all came with tears in their eyes to take leave of their mistress. During the service I wept, crossed myself, and bowed to the ground in the proper way, but did not pray with my soul and was rather indifferent. I was concerned about the fact that the new jacket they had put on me was very tight under the arms; I was thinking how to keep my trousers clean when I knelt down, and stealthily observed all who were present. My father stood at the head of the coffin, was as pale as a handkerchief, and restrained his tears with evident difficulty. His tall figure in a black dress-coat, his pale expressive face, and his movements, graceful and confident as ever when he crossed himself and bowed touching the ground with his fingers, took a candle from the priest's hand, or went up to the coffin, were extremely effective; but, I don't know why, I did not like his being able to be so effective at that moment. Mimi stood leaning against the wall and seemed hardly able to stand on her feet, her dress was crumpled and had bits of down sticking to it, her cap was on one side, her swollen eyes were red, her head shook, she did not cease sobbing in a heart-rending manner, and she kept covering her face with her handkerchief and her hands. It seemed to me that she did this to hide her face from the spectators and to rest a moment from feigned sobbing. I remembered that the day before, she told papa that mamma's death was such a terrible blow for her that she could never hope to recover from it, that it had deprived her of everything, that this angel (as she called mamma) had not forgotten her at the last and had expressed her wish to secure her and Katya's future. She shed bitter tears while saying this and perhaps her sorrow was sincere, but it was not pure

and exclusive. Lyúba in a black frock trimmed with weepers, all wet with tears, hung her head and occasionally glanced at the coffin. Her face expressed nothing but childish fear. Kátya stood beside her mother and, despite her long-drawn face, looked as rosy as ever. Volódya's frank nature was frank in its sorrow: now he stood deep in thought his eyes fixed on some object, now his lips suddenly quivered and he hurriedly crossed himself and bowed down. All the outsiders who attended the funeral seemed insufferable to me. The words of condolence they addressed to my father about her being happier there and not having been for this world, evoked a kind of vexation in me.

What right had they to talk about her and to weep for her? Some of them spoke of us as *orphans*. Just as if we did not know ourselves that children who have no mother are called so! They seemed to like being the first to call us by that name, just as people generally are in a hurry to call a newly married girl *Madame* for the first time.

In a far corner of the room, almost hidden by the open door of the butler's pantry, knelt a bent, grey-haired, old woman. With folded hands raised to heaven, she did not weep but prayed. Her soul went out to God and she asked Him to unite her with the one she had loved more than anything on earth, and she firmly believed that this would happen soon.

'There is one who loved her truly!' I thought, and I felt ashamed of myself.

The service was over; the face of the deceased was uncovered, and all present, excepting ourselves, went up to the coffin one after another to kiss her.

One of the last to walk up and take leave of her was a peasant woman with a pretty five-year-old girl in her arms, whom she had brought there heavens knows why. At that moment I dropped my wet handkerchief and was on the point of picking it up;

but just as I stooped, I was struck by a piercing cry of such horror that I shall never forget it were I to live to be a hundred; whenever I think of it, a cold shudder runs down my body. I raised my head: on a stool by the coffin stood that peasant woman, with difficulty holding in her arms the little girl who was pushing with her little hands, throwing back her frightened face, fixing her staring eyes on the dead face, and screaming in a dreadful, frenzied voice. I cried out in a voice that, I think, was even more dreadful than the one that had so staggered me, and ran out of the room.

It was only then that I understood what the strong, oppressive smell was that mingling with the incense filled the whole room; and the thought that the face that but a few days before had been so full of beauty and tenderness, the face of her I loved more than anything on earth, could evoke horror, seemed to reveal the bitter truth to me for the first time, and filled my soul with despair.

## XXVIII

### LAST SAD MEMORIES

MAMMA was no more, yet our life continued on the old lines: we went to bed and got up at the same hours and in the same rooms; morning and evening tea, dinner, supper—all took place at the usual time; tables and chairs stood in the same places, nothing had changed in the house or in our way of life—only she was not there.

It seemed to me that after such a misfortune everything ought to be changed; our ordinary course of life seemed to me an affront to her memory, and too vividly reminded me of her absence.

On the day before the funeral, after dinner, I felt

sleepy and went to Natálya Sávischna's room, meaning to lie down on her soft feather-bed under her warm quilt. When I entered Natálya Sávischna was lying on her bed, probably asleep. Hearing the sound of my footsteps she sat up, threw back the woollen shawl with which she had protected her head from the flies, straightened her cap, and seated herself on the side of her bed.

As I had often before happened to come to have an after-dinner nap in her room, she guessed why I had come, and rising from the bed, said:

'I suppose you have come to have a rest, my pet? Lie down!'

'Oh no, Natálya Sávischna!' said I, holding her back by her arm, 'I did not come at all for that . . . I've come just to . . . and you are tired yourself, you'd better lie down.'

'No, my dear, I am quite rested,' she said (I knew she had not slept for three days). 'Besides, this is no time for sleeping,' she added with a deep sigh.

I wanted to speak of our misfortune with Natálya Sávischna: I knew her sincerity and love, and so it would be a consolation for me to weep with her.

'Natálya Sávischna,' I asked after a pause, as I sat down on her bed, 'did you expect it?'

The old woman gave me a perplexed and surprised look, probably not understanding why I put that question to her.

'Who could have expected it?' I said.

'Oh, my dear,' she replied, giving me a look of the tenderest sympathy, 'not only did I not expect it but I can't even think of it now. Now for an old woman like me it has long been time to lay my old bones to rest—but see what I have had to survive. My old master, your grandfather—blessed be his memory! Prince Nicholas Mikháylovich, two brothers, sister Anna: I have followed them all to the grave, and they were all younger than I, my dear, and now— for

my sins no doubt—I have had to outlive her too. It's His holy will! He has taken her because she was worthy, and He needs the good there, too.'

This simple thought struck me as comforting, and I moved closer to Natálya Sávisna. She folded her hands on her bosom and looked upwards; her sunken and moist eyes expressed a great but tranquil sorrow. She firmly trusted that God had not parted her for long from the one on whom all her power of love had been centred for so many years.

'Yes, my dear, it does not seem long since I dandled her and swaddled her, and since she called me "Náša". She would come running to me, put her tiny arms round me and kiss me, saying: "Náša mine, beauty mine, you my little turkey-hen!" and I would say in fun: "Not at all, madam, you don't love me; only wait a little, when you grow up and get married you'll forget your Náša!" And she would become thoughtful and say: "No, I'd rather not marry if I can't take Náša with me; I shall never leave Náša." And now she has left me and did not wait for me. And how she did love me! But, to tell the truth, whom did she not love? Yes, my dear, you must not forget your mother; she was not human, but an angel from heaven. When her soul is in the kingdom of heaven she will still love you there and still rejoice in you.'

'Why do you say, "When she will be in the kingdom of heaven," Natálya Sávisna?' I asked. 'I should think she is there now.'

'No, my dear,' said Natálya Sávisna, lowering her voice and settling closer to me in the bed, 'her soul is here now.'

She pointed upward. She spoke almost in a whisper, and with such feeling and conviction that I involuntarily raised my eyes and looked at the cornice, searching for something there.

'Before a righteous soul goes to paradise it must

pass through forty trials, my dear, for forty days, and may remain in its own home. . . .'

She continued to speak for a long time in this way, and so simply and with such conviction—as if telling about quite ordinary things she had seen herself, and about which it could never enter any one's head to have the least doubt—that I listened to her, holding my breath and, though without quite understanding what she said, fully believing her.

'Yes, my dear, she is here now looking at us, and perhaps hearing what we are saying,' concluded Natálya Sávisna, and lowering her head she became silent.

She wanted a handkerchief to dry her falling tears; rose, looked me straight in the face, and in a voice trembling with emotion said:

'The Lord has drawn me many steps closer to Himself through this. What is there left for me here? Whom have I to live for? Whom to love?'

'But don't you love us?' I said reproachfully and hardly refraining from tears.

'God knows how I love you, my darlings, but I have never loved, nor can love, any one as I loved her.'

She could not say any more, turned away from me, and sobbed aloud.

I no longer thought of sleep, and we sat silently opposite one another and wept.

Fóka entered the room and seeing our condition, and probably unwilling to disturb us, silently and timidly stopped at the door, looking round.

'What do you want, Fóka dear?' asked Natálya Sávisna, drying her face.

'A pound and a half of raisins, four pounds of sugar, and three pounds of rice for the *kutyá*.<sup>1</sup>'

'Directly, directly, Fóka,' said Natálya Sávisna, hurriedly taking a pinch of snuff and going with rapid

<sup>1</sup> *Kutyá* is a dish made of rice, sugar, raisins and such things, placed on a table in church at services for the dead.



steps to the provision bin. The last traces of sorrow occasioned by our conversation vanished when she set about her duty, which she considered most important.

'Why four pounds?' she said in a grumbling tone, getting out the sugar and weighing it on the balance, 'three and a half will be sufficient,' and she took a few lumps from the balance.

'And what do they mean by asking for more rice, when I let them have eight pounds yesterday? You may do as you please, Fóka Demídych, but I won't let them have any more rice. That Vánka is glad of the turmoil in the house: perhaps he thinks things will pass unnoticed. No, I won't overlook anything concerning the master's property. Now who ever saw such a thing? Eight pounds!'

'What's to be done? He says it's all used up.'

'Oh well, here it is, take it. Let him have it!'

I was at the time surprised by this change from the touching emotion with which she had been speaking to me, to querulousness and petty economy. When considering it later I understood that in spite of what was passing in her soul, she had sufficient presence of mind to carry on her work, and that force of habit drew her to her usual occupations. Sorrow had acted on her so powerfully that she did not find it necessary to disguise the fact that she could attend to other things; she would not even have understood how such an idea could occur to any one.

Vanity is a feeling quite incompatible with true sorrow, and yet that feeling is so firmly grafted into man's nature that even the deepest sorrow rarely banishes it. Vanity in sorrow expresses itself by a desire to appear either stricken with grief, or unhappy, or firm, and these mean desires which we do not confess, but which hardly ever leave us even in our deepest sorrow, rob it of its strength, dignity, and sincerity. But Natálya Sávishna was so deeply

stricken by her misfortune that she had not a single desire left in her soul and lived on only from habit.

When she had let Fóka have the provisions asked for, and had reminded him about the pie which had to be made to set before the clergy, she let him go, took up her knitting, and again once more sat down beside me.

We again began talking about the same things, we wept again, and again dried our tears.

My talks with Natálya Sávisna were repeated every day; her quiet tears and calm, pious words gave me comfort and relief.

But we were soon separated: three days after the funeral we all moved to Moscow, and I was not destined ever to see her again.

Grandmamma received the terrible news only on our arrival, and her grief was extreme. We were not admitted to her, because for a whole week she was not in her right mind; the doctors feared for her life, the more so as she not only would not take any medicine, but did not speak to anybody, did not sleep, and took no food. Sometimes, sitting alone in the room in her easy chair, she suddenly began to laugh, then to sob without any tears, had convulsions, and in a frenzied voice shouted meaningless or terrible words. It was the first great sorrow she had experienced and it brought her to despair. She wanted to blame some one for her misfortune, and she uttered dreadful words, threatened some one, jumped up from the chair with extraordinary violence, paced the room with large, rapid strides, and then fell down unconscious.

Once I went to her room; she was sitting as usual in her armchair and appeared calm, but I was struck by her expression. Her eyes were wide open but her look seemed vague and dull: she gazed straight at me but probably did not see me. Her lips stretched slowly into a smile and she began to speak in a

pathetic and tender tone: 'Come here, my pet; come, my angel!'

I thought she was addressing me, and I drew nearer, but she was not looking at me. 'Oh, if you knew, my treasure, how I have suffered and how glad I am now that you have come. . . .' I understood that she imagined that she saw mamma, and I stopped. 'And I was told you were no more,' she continued, with a frown. 'What nonsense! As if you could die before me!' and she burst into terrible hysterical laughter.

Only people capable of loving deeply can experience deep grief; but that same necessity of loving acts as an antidote to grief and cures them. In consequence of this, man's moral nature is more tenacious of life than his physical nature. Grief never kills.

After a week grandmamma was able to weep, and she got better. Her first thoughts after she came to herself were of us, and her love for us increased. We kept near her chair; she wept softly, spoke of mamma, and caressed us tenderly.

No one who saw her grief could think that she exaggerated it, and the expressions of that grief were vehement and touching; but I, without knowing why, sympathized more with Natálya Sávisna, and am still convinced that no one loved mamma so sincerely and purely and mourned her loss so deeply, as that simple-hearted and loving creature.

With my mother's death the happy period of childhood ended for me and a new period began—that of boyhood; but since my recollections of Natálya Sávisna, whom I never saw again and who had such a powerful and good influence on my disposition and the development of my sensibility, belong to the first period, I will say a few more words about her and her death.

After we had left, as I was afterwards told by persons who had remained in the country, she fretted

very much for want of occupation. Though all the chests were still in her charge and she kept rummaging them, arranging, airing, and unfolding their contents, she missed the noise and bustle of a country residence inhabited by the family, to which she had from childhood been accustomed. Grief, the changed manner of life, and the absence of household cares, soon developed in her a senile ailment to which she had a tendency. Just a year after my mother's death she became affected with dropsy and took to her bed.

It must have been hard for Natálya Sávisna to live alone, and still harder to die alone, in the great, empty house at Petróvskoe, without relatives or friends. Every one in the house was fond of Natálya Sávisna and respected her, but she was not intimate with any of them, and prided herself on this. She considered that in her position of housekeeper, enjoying her master's confidence and in charge of so many chests full of all sorts of goods, intimacy with any one would inevitably involve her in partiality and guilty connivance; for this reason, or perhaps because she had nothing in common with the other servants, she kept aloof from them all and used to say that she had neither gossips nor connexions in the house and that no one would have her connivance in matters concerning the master's property.

She sought and found consolation in the confession of her feelings to God in ardent prayers; but sometimes in the moments of weakness to which every one is subject, when man finds the best consolation in the love and sympathy of a living being, she would take on to her bed her little pug dog (which fixed its yellow eyes on her and licked her hands), speak to it, and weep gently as she caressed it. When the dog began to whimper piteously she would try to quieten it, and say: 'Don't I know without that, that I shall die soon?'

A month before her death she took some white

calico, white muslin, and pink ribbons, out of her trunk, and with her maid's help made herself a white gown and cap, and arranged all that would be needed for her funeral to the last detail. She also sorted out everything in her master's chests and with the greatest exactitude gave it over, with a written inventory, into the care of the steward's wife. Then she got out two silk gowns and an ancient shawl that had once been given her by my grandmother, and my grandfather's gold-embroidered military uniform, which had also been given her to dispose of as she liked. Thanks to her care, the gold embroidery and lace on the uniform had remained quite fresh and the cloth untouched by moth. Before her death she expressed her wish that one of these gowns, a pink one, should be given to Volódya for a dressing-gown or a *besmet*,<sup>1</sup> and the other, a brown, chequered one, to me for the same purpose, and the shawl to Lyúba. She bequeathed the uniform to whichever of us should first become an officer. All the rest of her goods and money, except forty rubles which she set aside for her funeral and for prayers for her soul, she left to her brother. Her brother, who had been granted his freedom long before, was living in some distant province and led a most dissolute life, so she had had no intercourse with him during her lifetime.

When this brother came to receive his legacy, and her whole property proved to be worth only twenty-five assignation rubles,<sup>2</sup> he did not wish to believe it, and declared that it was impossible that an old woman who had lived with a wealthy family for sixty years and had charge of everything in it, and who was penurious all her life and trembled over

<sup>1</sup> *Beshmet*, a Tartar under-tunic.

<sup>2</sup> The assignation rubles were the depreciated currency in use after the Napoleonic wars, eventually converted at the rate of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  assignation rubles for one silver ruble of the value of about 38 pence.

every rag, should have left nothing. But it really was so.

Natálya Sávischna's illness lasted two months, and she bore her sufferings with truly Christian patience; did not grumble or complain, but only kept calling on God, as was her wont. An hour before her death she confessed with peaceful joy and received the sacrament and extreme unction.

She begged forgiveness of every one in the household for any wrong she might have done them, asked Father Basil, her confessor, to tell us all that she did not know how to thank us for our kindness, and that she asked us to forgive her if, through her stupidity, she had offended any one,—‘but I have never been a thief, and I can say that I never filched so much as a thread from my master!’ That was the one virtue she valued herself upon.

Having put on the dress and cap she had prepared, and leaning her elbows on her pillow, she talked with the priest to the very last, remembered that she had left nothing for the poor, got out ten rubles, and asked him to distribute them in the parish: then she crossed herself, lay down, sighed deeply for the last time, and uttered the name of God with a joyous smile.

She left this life without regret, did not fear death, and accepted it as a boon. This is often said, but how seldom it really is so! Natálya Sávischna was able not to fear death because she died in steadfast faith, and having fulfilled the gospel commandments. Her whole life had been pure unselfish love and self-sacrifice.

What if her beliefs might have been more lofty and her life devoted to higher aims—was that pure soul therefore less worthy of love and admiration?

She accomplished the best and greatest thing in life—she died without regrets or fear.

She was buried, according to her own wish, not far from the chapel that stands over our mother's

grave. The little mound overgrown with nettles and thistles, under which she lies, is surrounded by a black railing, and I never forget to go from the chapel to that fence and bow down to the ground.

Sometimes I stop in silence between the chapel and the black railing. Painful memories suddenly awaken in my soul. The question occurs to my mind: 'Can Providence have united me with those two beings, only that I should eternally regret them?'

1852.





# BOYHOOD



# I

## TRAVELLING TO TOWN

ONCE more two vehicles are drawn up at the porch of the Petróvskoe house—the one a closed carriage in which Mimi, Kátya, Lyúba, and a maid-servant, take their seats, and the steward, Jacob, takes his place on the box; the other the brichka, in which Volódya, I, and the footman, Vasíli—not long since recalled from commuted labour—are to travel.

Papa, who is to come to Moscow a few days later, stands bare-headed in the porch and makes the sign of the cross over the carriage window and the brichka.

‘Well, Christ be with you! Drive on!’ Jacob and the coachman (we are travelling with our own horses) take off their caps and cross themselves. ‘Gee up! God be with us!’ The carriages begin to jolt over the uneven road and the birches of the avenue one after the other run past us. I am not at all sad: my mental vision is directed not to what I am leaving behind but to what awaits me. The farther I am parted from the objects connected with the depressing memories that till now have filled my imagination, the more they lose their power and are rapidly replaced by a cheerful consciousness of life full of vigour, freshness, and hope.

I have seldom spent days—I won’t say so merrily, for I still felt ashamed to yield to merriment—but so pleasantly, so contentedly, as the four days of our journey. I had not before my eyes the closed doors of my mother’s bedroom which I could not pass without a tremor, nor the closed piano, never approached by any one and ever looked at with a kind of dread, nor mourning garments (we were all dressed in ordinary travelling clothes), nor any of

the things that, vividly reminding me of my irreparable loss, made me shun any manifestations of life for fear in some way of offending *her* memory. Here on the contrary new, picturesque places and objects continually arrested and diverted my attention, and the freshness of spring aroused in my soul joyful feelings of contentment with the present and bright hopes for the future.

Very, very early in the morning the pitiless and—like all holders of new posts—over-zealous Vasili, pulls off my blanket and declares that everything is ready and it is time to start. Shrink, pretend, or get angry, as you may, in order to prolong your sweet morning slumber for another quarter of an hour, you see by Vasili's resolute face that he is inflexible and is prepared to pull off the blanket another twenty times; and you jump up and run out into the yard to have a wash.

In the passage a samovár into which Mítka, the postilion, flushed red as a lobster, is blowing, is already on the boil. It is damp and misty outside, as if steam were rising from the odorous manure heap; the sun lights with its bright gay beams the eastern part of the sky and the thatched roofs, shiny with dew, of the roomy pent-houses that surround the yard. Under these one can see our horses tethered to the mangers and hear their steady chewing. A shaggy mongrel that had had a nap before dawn on a dry heap of manure, stretches itself lazily, and wagging its tail, starts at a jog-trot for the opposite side of the yard. An active peasant-woman opens some creaking gates and drives the dreamy cows into the street, where the tramping, the lowing, and the bleating, of the herd is already audible, and she exchanges a few words with a sleepy neighbour. Philip, his shirt-sleeves rolled up, winds up a bucket from the deep well and, splashing the clear water, pours it into an oak trough beside which the awakened

ducks are already splashing in a puddle; and I look with pleasure at Philip's impressive face with its broad beard, and at the thick sinews and muscles standing out sharply on his powerful bare arms when he makes any effort.

Behind the partition where Mimi slept with the girls and through which we had exchanged remarks in the evening, there is a sound of movement. Másha, the maid, runs past us more and more frequently with different articles she tries to hide from our curiosity with her dress, and at last the door opens and we are called in to tea.

Vasili, in a superfluous fit of zeal, keeps continually running into the room, carrying out first one thing and then another, winking at us, and in all manner of ways imploring Márya Ivánovna to make an early start. The horses are harnessed, and manifest their impatience by occasionally jingling the bells on their harness. Portmanteaux, trunks, boxes large and small, are again packed in, and we take our places. But every time this occurs we find a hill instead of a seat in the brichka, so that we cannot make out how all the things previously got packed in, or how we are now to sit. In particular a walnut tea-caddy with a three-cornered lid, which is put into the brichka and placed under me, arouses me to great indignation. But Vasili declares that it will all settle down, and I have no choice but to believe him.

The sun has only just risen above the dense white cloud which had covered the eastern horizon, and all about us is brightened by a calm, cheerful light. All around me is so beautiful, and my heart is so light and calm. . . . The road winds in front like a broad, greyish ribbon between fields of dry stubble and verdure gleaming with dew. Here and there we come across a gloomy willow or a young birch tree with small, sticky leaves, that throws a long shadow on the dry clayey ruts and the small green grass of the

road. . . . The monotonous rumble of our wheels and the tinkling of the bells do not drown the songs of the larks which circle around close to the road. The odour of moth-eaten cloth, dust, and acid of some kind, which distinguishes our brichka, is overpowered by the fragrance of the morning, and I feel within me a joyful unrest, a wish to do something—which is the sign of true enjoyment.

I had not time to say my prayers at the inn, but as I had noticed more than once that when, for any reason, I forgot to perform that duty I met with some mishap, I try to make good the omission: I take off my cap, turn towards the corner of the brichka, say my prayers, and cross myself under my jacket so that nobody shall notice it. But thousands of different objects distract my attention and I absent-mindedly repeat the same words of the prayer several times over.

There on the foot-path that winds beside the road, some slowly moving figures appear: they are women-pilgrims. Their heads are wrapped in dirty shawls, on their backs they carry knapsacks of birch-bark, their legs are swathed in dirty, ragged, leg-bands, and they wear heavy bast shoes. With measured swing of their staffs, and scarcely turning to look at us, one after another they move forward with slow heavy steps, and I am interested by the questions: where, and why, are they going? Will their journey be a long one, and how soon will the elongated shadows they throw on the road join the shadow of the willow near which they must pass? Here is a calash with four post-horses, rushing quickly towards us. Two seconds more, and faces looking at us affably and with curiosity from two yards off have flashed past, and it seems strange that those faces have nothing in common with me and I shall perhaps never see them again.

Then at one side of the road run two sweating, shaggy horses with collars on and with traces tucked

under their harness; and behind them, his legs in enormous boots hanging astride a horse on whose neck hangs a bow<sup>1</sup> with a bell that occasionally tinkles slightly, rides a post-boy—his felt hat stuck over one ear—singing a drawling song. His face and attitude indicate so much lazy and careless content, that it seems to me the height of happiness to be a post-boy and to ride on a return journey, singing sad songs. There, far beyond the ravine, a village church with a green roof shows up against the light-blue sky; here is the village, and the red roof of the squire's house with its green garden. Who lives in that house? Are there children, a father, a mother, or a teacher, in it? Why should we not drive up to that house and get to know its owners? Here comes a long row of enormous loaded carts, each drawn by three well-fed, stout-legged horses, to pass which we must keep to the side of the road. 'What are you carting?' Vasili asks the first carter, who, dangling his huge legs down from the cart and flourishing his little whip, turns an intent and inane look on us for a long time, and only replies when too far off to be heard. 'What goods are you carting?' Vasili asks another carter, who is lying, covered with new matting, in the railed-in front of a cart. A brown head with a red face and a small russet beard thrusts itself from under the matting, casts a look of contemptuous indifference at our brichka and again hides itself—and it occurs to me that probably these carters don't know who we are, where we come from, or where we are going.

For an hour and a half, absorbed in various observations, I pay no heed to the slanting figures on the mile-posts, but now the sun begins to shine more fiercely on my head and back, the road grows more dusty, the triangular lid of the tea-caddy begins to disturb me seriously, and I change my position

<sup>1</sup> Part of the Russian harness to which the shafts are fixed.

several times and grow hot, uncomfortable, and dull. My whole attention turns to the mile-posts and the figures on them; and I do various calculations as to when we can reach the next station. Twelve versts are one-third of thirty-six, and there are forty-one versts to Líptsi, so we have done one-third, and how much more? and so on.

'Vasili,' I say, when I see he is beginning to nod on the box, 'let me sit on the box, there's a dear.' Vasili agrees. We change places; he at once begins to snore and stretches out so that there is no room left for anybody else in the brichka; while from the height I occupy there opens out before me an extremely pleasant picture—our four horses, Neruchinskaya, Sexton, Left-Shaft, and Apothecary, whom I knew down to the minutest details and shades of all their characteristics.

'Why is it, Philip, that Sexton is on the off-side and not on the near-side to-day?' I ask rather timidly.

'Sexton?'

'And Neruchinskaya is not pulling at all!' say I.

'Sexton can't be harnessed on the near-side,' says Philip, disregarding my last remark. 'He is not that kind of horse to be harnessed on the near-side. On the near-side one wants a horse that, in a word, is a horse, and he is not that kind of horse.'

With these words Philip leans over to his right and, jerking the rein with all his might, begins to whip poor Sexton on his legs and tail in a peculiar upward manner, and though Sexton tries as hard as he can, and pulls the whole brichka to one side, Philip only abandons that proceeding when he feels it necessary to rest, and pull his hat, for some unknown reason, on one side, though till then it had sat very firmly and well on his head. I take advantage of that propitious moment and ask Philip to let me drive. He first gives me one rein, then another, and at last all six reins and the whip pass into my hands and I



am perfectly happy. I try to imitate Philip in every way and ask him whether it's all right, but it generally ends by his being dissatisfied with me; saying that one horse pulls too hard and another does not pull at all, and finally he thrusts his elbow in front of me and deprives me of the reins. The heat continually increases; fleecy clouds like soap-bubbles begin to be blown upwards higher and higher, run together, and assume dark-grey shades. A hand holding a bottle and a small bundle is thrust out of the carriage window, and Vasili, with surprising agility, jumps down from the moving brichka and brings us a bottle of kvas and some cheese-cakes.

At a steep downward slope we all get out of the vehicles and sometimes race down to the bridge, while Vasili and Jacob, after putting a drag on the wheels, hold the carriage on both sides with their hands, as if they could support it should it fall. Then, with Mimi's permission, Volódya or I get into the carriage, and Lyúba or Kátya into the brichka. This change affords great pleasure to the girls because, as they rightly say, it is much jollier in the brichka. At times, while passing through a grove during the heat of the day, we lag behind the carriage, gather some green branches, and construct with them an arbour over the brichka. The moving arbour races full speed after the carriage, and then Lyúba shrieks in a most piercing voice, as she never fails to do on every occasion that gives her great pleasure.

But here is the village where we are to dine and rest. The smells of the village are already noticeable—smells of smoke, tar, and cracknels; we hear the sound of voices, of footsteps, and of wheels, and our harness-bells do not sound as they did in the open fields; on both sides we catch glimpses of thatched huts, with their small, carved, wooden porches and green or red shutters to their little windows, out of which here and there the head of an inquisitive woman is

thrust. Here are little peasant boys and girls with nothing on but their smocks: with wide-open eyes and outstretched arms they stand motionless on one spot, or run bare-foot through the dust after our vehicles with quick little steps and, regardless of Philip's threatening gestures, try to climb on the portmanteaux that are strapped on behind. And now two red-haired inn-keepers come running, one each side of our vehicles, and with inviting words and gestures vie with each other in enticing the travellers. 'Whoa!' The gates creak, the cross-bars to which the traces of the side-horses are attached scrape the gateposts, and we drive into the yard of an inn. Four hours of rest and freedom!

## II

### THE STORM

THE sun was sinking to the west and burnt my neck and cheeks intolerably with its slanting rays; it was impossible to touch the scorching edges of the brichka; dense clouds of dust rose from the road and filled the air. There was not a breath of air to carry it away. At a regular distance in front of us swung, with a rhythmic motion, the tall dusty body of our carriage, with luggage on its roof, and beyond this now and then appeared the whip the coachman was flourishing, his hat, and Jacob's cap. I did not know what to do with myself: neither Volódya's face black with dust, as he dozed by my side, nor the movements of Philip's back, nor the long shadow of our brichka which followed us at an oblique angle, afforded me any diversion. My whole attention was concentrated on the mile-posts which I noticed from afar, and on the clouds, which had been scattered over the horizon but, with threatening black hues, now gathered into one gloomy storm-cloud. Now

and then there came a roll of distant thunder. This latter fact above all increased my impatience to reach the inn. Thunderstorms produced in me an indescribable feeling of depression and dread.

It was yet some ten versts to the nearest village, and the large, dark-purple cloud, appearing from heaven knows where, was approaching swiftly though there was no wind. The sun, not yet hidden by the clouds, brightly lit up its sombre form and the grey streaks that ran from it to the very horizon. At times lightning flashed in the distance, and a feeble rumble which gradually grew stronger, came nearer and passed into an intermittent thunder that resounded through the whole heaven.

Vasili rose from the box-seat and lifted the hood of the brichka; the coachmen put on their overcoats and, taking off their caps, crossed themselves at each clap of thunder; the horses pricked up their ears and distended their nostrils, as if smelling the fresh air which came from the approaching storm-cloud; and the brichka travelled faster over the dusty road. I felt ill at ease and the blood flowed faster through my veins.

But now the nearest cloud begins to obscure the sun, which peeps out for the last time, lights up the terribly gloomy part of the horizon, and disappears. Everything around suddenly changes and takes on a sombre aspect. Here the aspen grove begins to quiver, its leaves turn a kind of dim whitish colour clearly outlined against the purple background of the cloud, and they rustle and twirl about; the tops of the tall birches begin to sway and tufts of dry grass fly across the road. Martens and white-breasted swallows, as if intending to stop us, sweep round the brichka and fly under the very breasts of the horses; jackdaws with ruffled wings fly sideways to the wind, the flaps of the leather apron we have fastened over ourselves begin to lift, let in gusts of damp wind and, blowing about, flap against the body of the brichka.

The lightning seems to flash right into the brichka, blinds me, and lights up for an instant the grey cloth, its braiding, and Volódyá's figure crouching in the corner. Just above my head at that very moment a majestic peal resounds which, seeming to rise higher and higher and wider and wider in a huge spiral, gradually strengthens and changes into a deafening roar—forcing one involuntarily to tremble and hold one's breath. "The wrath of God!" How much poetry there is in that popular conception!

The wheels revolve faster and faster; by the backs of Vasíli and of Philip who impatiently shakes the reins, I notice that they too are frightened. The brichka rolls rapidly downhill and rattles on to a wooden bridge. I fear to move, and every moment expect that we shall all perish.

"Whoa!" A swingle-tree has come off, and despite the continuous and deafening peals of thunder we are obliged to stop on the bridge.

Leaning my head against the edge of the brichka, I hopelessly watch with sinking heart and bated breath the movements of Philip's thick black fingers, while he slowly ties a loop and adjusts the traces, pushing the side horse now with the palm of his hand, now with the whip-handle.

Anxious feelings of depression and fear increase in me with the intensity of the storm, but when the solemn momentary lull arrives which usually precedes a violent outbreak, these feelings reach such a pitch that if that condition had lasted another quarter of an hour, I feel sure I should have died of the agitation.

At that very moment from under the bridge, a human creature suddenly appears in a dirty tattered shirt, with a swollen meaningless countenance, with a shaking, close-cropped, bare head, crooked muscleless legs, and in place of a hand a red shiny stump, which he thrusts straight into the brichka.

'Ma-a-ster! Give something to a cripple for Christ's sake!' he says in a suffering voice, and at each word crosses himself and bows down to his waist.

I cannot express the chill of horror which seized my soul at that moment. A shiver ran through my hair, and my eyes were fixed with blank dread upon the beggar.

Vasili, who distributes the alms on our journey, gives Philip instructions how to re-attach the swingle-tree, and only when everything is ready, and Philip, gathering up the reins, is climbing back on to the box, begins to take something out of his side pocket. But we have hardly started before a blinding flash of lightning, that for an instant fills the whole hollow with fiery light, causes the horses to stop, and is immediately followed by such a deafening clap of thunder that it seems as if the whole vault of heaven will crash down upon us. The wind still increases; the manes and tails of the horses, Vasili's cloak, and the flaps of the leather apron, are blown in the same direction and spread out boisterously in the wind. A raindrop falls heavily on the leather hood of the brichka . . . another, a third, a fourth, and suddenly, as if some one had begun drumming over our heads, the whole country resounds with the regular pattering of falling rain. By the motion of Vasili's elbows I see that he is untying his purse; the beggar, still crossing himself and bowing, runs so close to our wheels that he may be run over at any moment. 'Give, in Christ's name!' At last a copper coin flies past us, and the pitiful creature in his coarse rags, that are wet through and cling to his thin limbs, stops bewildered in the middle of the road, swaying in the wind, and is lost to my sight.

The slanting rain, driven by the violent wind, pours down as from a bucket; from the back of Vasili's frieze coat streams run down into the pool of turbid

water that has gathered on the apron. The dust, at first beaten into little pellets, changes into liquid mud which is kneaded by the wheels; the jolting becomes less violent, and turbid streams run in the clayey ruts. The lightning flashes become wider and paler, and the rolling of the thunder is now less startling amid the regular patter of the rain.

But now the rain becomes finer, the black cloud, beginning to break into fleecy cloudlets, grows lighter where the sun should be—and between the light-grey edges of the cloud a patch of clear azure just shows itself. A minute later a timid ray of sunshine glistens in the puddles of the road, in the straight streaks of fine rain that fall as if coming through a sieve, and on the bright rain-washed grass along the road. A black cloud still covers the opposite horizon just as threateningly, but I no longer fear it. I experience an inexpressible, joyful, feeling of hope in life, which rapidly replaces my heavy feeling of terror. My soul smiles in accord with refreshed and rejoicing nature. Vasili turns down the collar of his cloak, takes off his cap and shakes it; Volódya throws back the apron; I lean out of the brichka and eagerly inhale the fresh and fragrant air. The bright, well-washed body of the carriage, with its boxes and portmanteaux, sways in front of us; the backs of the horses, the harness, the reins, and the tyres, are all wet and glisten in the sun as if freshly varnished. On one side of the road a boundless field of winter grain, divided here and there by shallow hollows, gleams with its wet earth and vegetation, and stretches away like a shadowy carpet to the very horizon. On the other side an aspen grove with hazel and wild cherry undergrowth stands motionless as if in an excess of joy, and slowly sheds bright raindrops from its clean-washed branches on to last year's leaves. On all sides crested skylarks circle with glad songs and swoop swiftly down. In the wet bushes one hears

the busy movements of small birds, and from the middle of the wood distinctly comes the voice of a cuckoo. The delicious scent of the wood after the spring storm, the odour of the birches, of the violets, the rotting leaves, the mushrooms, and the wild cherry, is so enthralling that I cannot stay in the brichka, but jump down from its step, run to the bushes and, though I get sprinkled with the rain-drops that shower down on me, break off wet branches of the flowering wild cherry, stroke my face with them, and revel in their exquisite aroma. Heedless even of the fact that large lumps of mud stick to my boots and that my stockings have long been wet, I run splashing through the mud to the carriage window.

'Lyúba! Kátya!' I shout, handing in some branches of wild cherry, 'look how nice it is!'

The girls squeal and exclaim; Mimi shouts to me to go away or I shall certainly be run over.

'But just smell what a scent it has!' I cry.

### III

#### A NEW VIEW

KÁTYA sat beside me in the brichka and, bending her pretty head pensively, gazed at the dusty road which ran back under our wheels. I looked at her in silence and was surprised by the sad, unchildlike expression I noticed for the first time on her rosy little face.

'We shall soon be in Moscow now,' I said. 'What do you think it is like?'

'I don't know,' she replied, reluctantly.

'Anyway, what do you think? Is it bigger than Sérpukhov, or not?'

'What?'

'Oh, nothing.'

But by the instinctive feeling with which one human being guesses another's thoughts, and which

serves as the guiding thread of conversation, Kátya understood that her indifference hurt me. She lifted her head and turned to me.

'Papa told you that we are going to live with your grandmamma?'

'He did: grandmamma wants us to live with her for good.'

'And we shall all live there?'

'Of course. We shall live upstairs on one side, you on the other, and papa in the wing; but we shall all dine together downstairs with grandmamma.'

'Mamma says that your grandmother is very grand and very cross.'

'No-o-o! She only seems so at first. She is grand, but not at all cross. On the contrary she is very kind and pleasant. If you had seen what a ball there was on her name-day!'

'All the same I am afraid of her; besides, Heaven only knows whether we . . .'

Kátya suddenly stopped and again became thoughtful.

'Wha-at?' I asked anxiously.

'No, nothing.'

'No, why did you say "Heaven knows . . ."?'

'Well, you were saying there was a ball at your grandmother's?'

'Yes. It's a pity you were not there. There were lots of visitors—about a thousand people—music, generals, and I danced. . . . Kátya!' I said, suddenly stopping in the midst of my description, 'you are not listening!'

'Yes, I am. You said you danced.'

'Why are you so depressed?'

'One can't always be merry.'

'No, you have changed a great deal since we returned from Moscow. Tell me, truly,' I added, turning towards her with a resolute look, 'why have you become so strange?'



'As if I were strange!' replied Kátya with animation which proved that my remark interested her. 'I am not at all strange.'

'No, you are not what you used to be,' I continued. 'Formerly one could see that you were one with us in everything, that you looked on us as relations and loved us as we love you, but now you have grown so serious and keep away from us. . . .'

'Not at all!'

'No, let me finish,' I interrupted her, feeling already a slight tickling in my nose, which preceded the tears that always rose to my eyes when I expressed a long-repressed and intimate thought. 'You avoid us and talk only with Mimi, as if you didn't want to know us.'

'But one can't always remain the same: one must change sometime,' answered Kátya, who had a habit of explaining everything by a kind of fatalistic necessity, when she did not know what to say.

I remember that once when she had quarrelled with Lyúba who had called her 'a stupid little girl', she replied, 'Not everybody can be clever, there must be stupid ones too;' but I was not satisfied with her reply, that 'one must change sometime,' and I continued to question her.

'Why must one?'

'Well, we shan't always be living together,' answered Kátya, blushing slightly and gazing intently at Philip's back. 'Mamma could live with your mother who was her friend, but Heaven knows if she and the Countess, who, they say, is very irritable, will get on together. Besides, anyhow we shall part some day; you are rich—you have Petróvskoe—and are poor—Mamma hasn't anything.'

'You are rich, we are poor' . . . These words and the conception connected with them, seemed to me very strange. In my perception at that time only beggars and peasants could be poor, and my imagination could not at all associate the idea of poverty with

the graceful, pretty Kátya. It seemed to me that if Mimi and Kátya had always lived with us, they would always go on living so, and sharing everything equally. It could not be otherwise. But now, thousands of new indistinct thoughts concerning the equality of their position and ours swarmed in my head, and I felt so ashamed that we were rich and they poor, that I blushed and had not the courage to look at Kátya.

'What of it if we are rich and they poor?' I thought. 'And why should it make a separation necessary? Why should we not divide what we have equally?' But I understood that it would not do to speak of this to Kátya, and some practical instinct conflicting with this logical consideration, was already telling me that she was right and that it would be out of place to explain my thought to her.

'Is it possible that you really mean to leave us?' said I. 'How are we going to live apart?'

'What 's to be done? I am sorry myself; but if it does happen I know what I shall do. . . .'

'Become an actress? . . . What nonsense!' I interrupted her, knowing that to be an actress had always been her cherished dream.

'No, I said that when I was little. . . .'

'Then what will you do?'

'I will go into a convent, and live there and wear a black dress and velvet cap.'

Kátya began to cry.

Has it ever happened to you, reader, at a certain point in your life, suddenly to notice that your outlook on things has completely changed, as if everything seen till then had suddenly turned to you its other, unknown side? That sort of moral change occurred in me for the first time during this journey, from which I date the beginning of my boyhood.

For the first time the idea clearly occurred to me that not we alone—not our family alone—lived in

the world, and that not all interests centred about us, but that another life existed—that of people who had nothing in common with us, did not trouble about us, and even had no idea of our existence. Certainly I knew all this before, but I did not know it as I knew it then. I had not realized it, or felt it.

An idea changes to a conviction only in one particular way, often a quite unexpected one and different from that in which other minds obtain the same conviction. My conversation with Kátya, which touched me deeply and made me ponder on her future, was the way in my case. When I looked at the villages and towns through which we passed, in every house of which lived at least one such family as ours, at the women and children who looked with momentary curiosity at our carriage and then disappeared from our sight for ever, at the shopkeepers and peasants who not only did not bow to us as I was accustomed to see done in Petróvskoe, but did not even bestow a glance on us, the thought came into my mind for the first time: 'What can interest them, if they don't care at all about us?' And from this question followed others: 'How and on what do they live? How do they bring up their children? Do they teach them? Do they let them play? How do they punish them?' and so on.

#### IV

#### IN MOSCOW

AFTER our arrival in Moscow the change in my outlook on things, on people, and on my relation to them, became still more marked.

At the first meeting with my grandmother, when I saw her thin, wrinkled face and dim eyes, the feeling of servile respect and awe I had had for her changed to compassion; and when, letting her face

droop on to Lyúba's head, she began to sob as if the body of her beloved daughter lay before her eyes, my compassion changed even to a feeling of affection. To notice her sorrow on seeing us, made me feel awkward; I was conscious that we, ourselves, were nothing to her, and were dear only as a memory; I felt that every kiss she showered on my cheeks expressed but one thought: 'She is no more, she is dead, I shall never see her again!'

Papa, who hardly took any notice of us in Moscow and, with an ever-worried face, came to us only at dinner, in frock-coat or dress suit, had—together with his large shirt-collar and cuffs, his dressing-gown, his village-elders, stewards, visits to the threshing-ground and hunts—lost much in my estimation. Karl Iványch, whom grandmamma called the 'usher', and who—heaven knows why—had suddenly taken it into his head to exchange his venerable, familiar, bald head for a reddish wig with a straight parting almost in the middle, seemed to be so strange and ridiculous, that I was surprised I had not noticed this before.

Between the girls and ourselves also there arose a sort of invisible barrier; they and we already each had our own secrets; they seemed proud of their frocks which had become longer, and we of our trousers with straps. Mimi came down to dinner the first Sunday in such a fine gown and with such ribbons on her cap, that one could see at once that we were no longer in the country and that everything would now be different.

## V

### MY ELDER BROTHER

I WAS only a year and some months younger than Volódya; we grew up, studied, and played, always together. No distinction of elder and younger was

made between us; but just about the time of which I am speaking I began to understand that I was not his equal in age, in interests, or in capacity. It even seemed to me that Volódyá himself was aware of his superiority and proud of it. This belief, perhaps unfounded, was suggested to me by my vanity, which suffered at every conflict with him. He stood above me in everything—in games, in lessons, in disputes, and in manners—and all this removed me from him and caused me to experience perplexing moral sufferings. If, when they first gave tucked linen shirts to Volódyá, I had said frankly that I was vexed at not having such shirts myself, I am sure I should have felt more at ease, and every time he adjusted his collar should not have thought that he did it just to annoy me.

What tormented me most was that it sometimes seemed to me that Volódyá understood me but tried to hide it.

Who has not noticed those mysterious, unspoken relations which manifest themselves in a scarcely perceptible smile, a movement, or a look, among people who always live together: brothers, friends, man and wife, or master and servant—especially if these people are not entirely frank with each other? How many unexpressed wishes, thoughts, and fears of being understood, are expressed in one unintentional glance, when their eyes meet timidly and irresolutely!

But perhaps my excessive sensibility and inclination to analyse deceived me in this respect; perhaps Volódyá did not feel at all as I did. He was impetuous, frank, and changeable, in his enthusiasms. Carried away by very various matters, he flung himself into them heart and soul.

He would suddenly be seized with a passion for pictures: himself take up painting, spend all his money on pictures, and beg them from the drawing-

master, from papa, and from grandmamma; then he would be seized by a passion for ornaments with which to adorn his table, collecting them from the whole house; then by a passion for novels, which he obtained on the quiet and read for whole days and nights. I was involuntarily carried away by his passions, but was too proud to follow in his footsteps, and too young and not independent enough to choose a line for myself. But I envied him nothing so much as his happy and proudly frank character, which showed itself very clearly in the quarrels we occasionally had. I felt that he acted well, but I could not imitate him.

Once, when his passion for ornaments was at its height, I went up to his table and accidentally broke an empty, brightly coloured flask.

'Who asked you to touch my things?' said Volódya, entering the room and noticing the disorder I had produced in the symmetry of the various ornaments on his table. 'And where is the flask? I am sure you . . .'

'I dropped it by accident and it broke. What does it matter?'

'Be so good as never to *dare* to touch my things,' he said, putting the pieces of the broken flask together and looking at them regretfully.

'Please don't issue orders,' I answered. 'If I broke it, I broke it: what more is there to say about it!'

And I smiled, though I did not feel at all like smiling.

'It's nothing to you, but it's something to me,' Volódya went on, jerking his shoulder, a gesture he had inherited from papa. 'He breaks it and then laughs! Unbearable *brat*!'

'I'm a brat, but you are big and stupid.'

'I do not intend to have a scolding match with you,' said Volódya, pushing me lightly aside. 'Be off!'

'Don't push!'

'Be off!'

'Don't push, I tell you!'

Volódya took me by the arm and was about to

pull me away from the table, but I was irritated to the highest degree, and seizing a leg of the table, I upset it.

'There, you have it!' and all his china and glass ornaments fell crashing on the floor.

'Disgusting brat!' shouted Volódya, trying to catch the falling things.

'Well, now it's all over between us,' I thought as I left the room. 'We have quarrelled for good.'

We did not speak to each other till evening. I felt myself guilty, feared to look at him, and could not settle to anything all day. Volódya, on the contrary, did his lessons well, and talked and laughed with the girls after dinner as usual.

As soon as our master had finished the lesson, I left the room. I felt afraid, uncomfortable, and ashamed, to remain alone with my brother. After our history lesson in the evening, I took my exercise books and went towards the door. As I passed Volódya, though I wanted to go up to him and be reconciled, I pouted and tried to put on an angry expression. At that moment Volódya looked up, and with a scarcely perceptible kindly ironical smile, looked boldly at me. Our eyes met, and I understood that he understood me, and that he knew I understood that he understood me; but some irresistible feeling made me turn away.

'Nicky!' he said in a most natural and not at all pathetic voice, 'don't be cross. Forgive me if I offended you,' and he held out his hand to me.

It felt as if something that rose higher and higher pressed my chest and hindered my breathing, but this only continued for a second; tears came to my eyes, and I felt better.

'Forgive . . . m . . . me, Voló . . . dya!' I said, pressing his hand.

But Volódya looked at me as if he could not understand why I had tears in my eyes. . . .

VI  
MÁSHA

BUT no change that took place in my outlook on things was so startling to myself as the one which made me cease to regard one of our housemaids as a servant of the feminine gender, and begin to see in her a *woman*, on whom might depend, to some extent, my peace of mind and happiness.

As far back as I can remember myself, I remember Másha in our house, and never till the occurrence that entirely changed my view of her, and which I will relate presently, had I paid the slightest attention to her. Másha was about twenty-five when I was fourteen. She was very good-looking, but I am afraid to describe her lest my fancy should again present to me the enchanting and delusive image it formed at the time of my passion for her. Not to blunder, I will only say that she had a remarkably white skin, was voluptuously developed, and was a woman,—while I was fourteen.

In one of those moods when, lesson-book in hand, you pace up and down the room trying to step only on the cracks between the boards, or sing some senseless air, or smear the edge of the table with ink, or quite unthinkingly repeat some saying: in short, when your mind refuses to work and your imagination, taking the upper hand, seeks impressions, I left the classroom and aimlessly went on to the landing.

Some one in house-shoes was ascending the lower flight of the staircase. Of course I wanted to know who it was, but suddenly the sound of the steps ceased, and I heard Másha's voice: 'Now then, what are you fooling for? If Márya Ivánovna comes, will it be nice?'

'She won't come,' Volódya's voice whispered, and something rustled as if he were trying to hold her back.



'Now, where are you putting your hands? For shame!' and Másha, with her kerchief pulled awry exposing her plump white neck, ran up past me.

I cannot express my amazement at this discovery; but the feeling of astonishment was soon replaced by one of sympathy with Volódya's act—I no longer marvelled at his action itself, but only at his having discovered that it was pleasant to behave so, and I involuntarily wished to imitate him.

I sometimes spent hours on the landing, not thinking at all but listening with the closest attention to the slightest movement upstairs; but I could never bring myself to imitate Volódya, though I wished to do that more than anything else in the world. Sometimes, hidden behind a door, I listened with a painful feeling of envy and jealousy to a commotion beginning in the maids' room, and the thought occurred to me what my position would be if I were to go upstairs and, like Volódya, try to kiss Másha. What should I, with my broad nose and bristling tufts of hair, reply if she asked me what I wanted? At times I heard Másha say to Volódya: 'Well, this is horrid! Really, why have you come bothering? Go away, you naughty boy! Why does Nicholas Petróvich never come here and play the fool?' . . . She did not know that Nicholas Petróvich was under the stairs at that moment, and was ready to give anything in the world to be in naughty Volódya's place.

I was bashful by nature, but my bashfulness was still further increased by the conviction that I was ugly. I am convinced that nothing has so marked an influence on the direction of a man's mind as his appearance, and not his appearance itself so much as his conviction that it is attractive or unattractive.

I was too egotistic to get used to my position, and comforted myself as the fox did when it persuaded itself that the grapes were sour; that is, I tried to despise all the pleasures afforded by attractive looks,

which it seemed to me Volódyá availed himself of and which I envied him with all my soul, and I exerted all my powers of mind and imagination to find pleasure in haughty solitude.

## VII

## SHOT

'OH, my God, gunpowder!' exclaimed Mimi in a voice of breathless agitation. 'What are you doing? You wish to burn down the house and destroy us all. . . .'

And with an indescribable expression of fortitude, Mimi ordered all present to stand aside, and with long, determined strides, went up to some shot spilt on the floor, which, regardless of the danger that might arise from a sudden explosion, she began to tread under foot. When in her opinion the danger was past, she called Mikháy in and ordered him to throw all this 'gunpowder' as far away as possible, or better still into the water, and proudly tossing her cap went into the drawing-room. 'They are well looked after, that 's plain!' she muttered.

When papa came in from the wing we went with him to grandmamma's room. Mimi was already there, sitting near the window, and sternly looked past the door with a kind of mysteriously official expression. In her hand she held something wrapped in several papers. I guessed that this was some of the shot, and that grandmamma already knew about it.

Besides Mimi in the room was Gáša, one of the maids, who as her flushed and angry face showed was greatly upset, and Dr. Blumenthal, a short pock-marked man, who was vainly trying to tranquillize Gáša by making mysterious, pacifying signs to her with his head and eyes.

Grandmamma herself was sitting slightly sideways

playing 'Traveller', a game of patience which always indicated a very inauspicious frame of mind.

'How are you feeling to-day, mamma? Slept well?' asked papa, kissing her hand respectfully.

'Splendidly, my dear. I think you know that I am always perfectly well,' replied grandmamma, in a tone implying that papa's question was most inappropriate and offensive. 'Well, do you wish to give me a clean handkerchief?' she went on, turning to Gáša.

'I have given it you,' Gáša replied, pointing to a snow-white cambric handkerchief that lay on the arm of grandmamma's chair.

'Take away that dirty rag and give me a clean one, my dear!'

Gáša went up to the wardrobe, pulled out a drawer, and banged it so hard that the windows of the room rattled. Grandmamma glanced sternly at all of us and continued to watch the maid's movements intently. When she had handed her, as it seemed to me, the very same handkerchief, grandmamma said:

'When will you rub my snuff for me, my dear?'

'I will when I have time.'

'What do you say?'

'I will rub some to-day.'

'If you don't wish to serve me, my dear, you should say so. I would have let you go long ago!'

'Well, let me, I shan't cry!' muttered the maid under her breath.

At that moment the doctor began to wink at her, but she looked at him so angrily and resolutely that he immediately dropped his eyes and busied himself with his watch-key.

'You see, my dear, how I am spoken to in my own house?' said grandmamma, turning to papa when Gáša, still grumbling, left the room.

'Allow me to rub the snuff for you myself,' said

papa, evidently finding himself placed in a very difficult position by this unexpected appeal.

'No, thank you. You see she is so rude because she knows that no one else can rub the snuff as I like it. Do you know, my dear,' grandmamma went on after a moment's pause, 'that your children nearly burnt the house down to-day?'

Papa looked with respectful curiosity at grandmamma.

'Yes, that's what they play with! Show it to him,' she said, turning to Mimi.

Papa took the shot in his hand and could not help smiling.

'But this is shot, mamma,' he said, 'it is not at all dangerous.'

'I am very grateful to you for teaching me, my dear, only I am already too old. . . .'

'Nerves, nerves!' whispered the doctor.

Papa at once turned to us:

'Where did you get it? And how dare you play with such things?'

'You need not ask them, but should ask their usher,' said grandmamma, pronouncing the word *usher* with especial contempt. 'What's he looking after?'

'Volódya says that Karl Iványch himself gave him that gunpowder,' chimed in Mimi.

'There, you see how much good he is,' continued grandmamma, 'and where is he, that *usher*—what's his name? . . . Send him here.'

'I have let him go out to pay a visit,' said papa.

'That's unreasonable: he should always be here. They are not my children but yours and I have no right to advise you, because you are wiser than I,' continued grandmamma, 'but it appears time to engage a tutor for them, and not an *usher*, a German peasant: and a stupid peasant, who can't teach them anything but bad manners and Tyrolese songs. I

ask you what good is it to the children to be able to sing Tyrolese songs? However, there is *now* no one to think about that, and you can do as you like.'

The word 'now' meant: 'Now that they have no mother' and aroused sad memories in grandmamma's heart. She lowered her eyes, looked at the snuff-box with its portrait, and meditated.

'I have long been thinking of it,' papa hastened to say, 'and wished to consult you, mamma. Should we not engage St. Jérôme, who now gives them lessons by the hour?'

'Yes, and that will be excellent, *cher ami*,' replied grandmamma, no longer in the dissatisfied tone in which she had been speaking. 'St. Jérôme would at any rate be a tutor who would know how to guide *des enfants de bonne maison*.<sup>1</sup> He is not just a menial, an *usher*, fit only to take them out for a walk.

'I will speak to him to-morrow,' said papa.

And two days after this conversation Karl Iványch really yielded his place to the young French dandy.

## VIII

### KARL IVÁNYCH'S STORY

LATE on the eve of the day on which Karl Iványch was to leave us for good, he was standing beside his bed, in his quilted dressing-gown and red cap, bending over his portmanteau and carefully packing his things.

Latterly Karl Iványch's manner to us had been peculiarly stiff; he seemed to avoid any intercourse with us. So now, when I entered the room, he glanced at me from under his brows and continued his occupation. I lay down on my bed, but Karl Iványch, who formerly had always forbidden me to

<sup>1</sup> Children of good family.

do so, said nothing to me, and the thought that he would not scold nor restrain us any more, that he had now nothing to do with us, vividly reminded me of the coming separation. His having ceased to care for us grieved me, and I wished to express this to him.

'Let me help you, Karl Iványch,' I said, going up to him.

He glanced at me and turned away again, but in the cursory glance he had thrown on me I read, not the indifference by which I had explained his coldness, but sincere and concentrated sorrow.

'God sees and knows everything, and everything depends on His holy will,' he said, straightening himself to his full height and sighing deeply. 'Yes, Nicholas,' he continued, when he noticed the expression of sincere sympathy with which I looked at him, 'it is my lot to be unhappy from my very childhood, and to my grave. I have always been repaid by evil for the good I have done people, and my reward is not here but there,' he said, pointing to heaven. 'If you knew my story and all I have had to endure in this life! . . . I have been a shoemaker, a soldier, and a deserter, I have been in a factory, and have been a teacher, and now I am nothing, and like the Son of God I have nowhere to lay my head,' he concluded, closing his eyes and sinking into his armchair.

Noticing that Karl Iványch was in that emotional state of mind in which he expressed his innermost thoughts to himself regardless of his hearers, I sat down silently on the bed, without taking my eyes off his kind face.

'You are not a child, you can understand! I will tell you my story and all I have endured in this life. Some day you will think of the old friend who loved you children so much.'

Karl Iványch leaned his elbow on a small table that was standing beside him, took a pinch of snuff, and turning his eyes to heaven, began his tale in that

peculiar, monotonous, guttural voice in which he generally dictated to us:

‘I was unhappy already in my mudder’s womb. *Das Unglück verfolgte mich schon im Schoosse meiner Mutter!*’ he repeated in German even more feelingly.

As Karl Iványch told me his story more than once, employing the same expressions and the same unvarying intonations, I hope to reproduce it almost word for word, except of course the mistakes in language, of which the reader may judge by the first sentence. Whether it was his true story, or the production of his fancy evolved during his lonely life in our house and which he had himself begun to believe as a result of frequent repetition, or whether he merely embroidered the actual facts of his life with fantastic additions, I have never been able to decide. On the one hand, he told his story with too much vivid emotion and methodical consistency—the chief signs of veracity—to make it possible not to believe it; on the other hand, there were too many poetic beauties in his story, and just these beauties aroused one’s doubts.

‘In my veins flows the noble blood of the Counts of Sommerblatt! *In meinen Adern fliesst das edle Blut der Grafen von Sommerblatt!* I was born six weeks after the wedding. My mother’s husband (I called him papa) was Count Sommerblatt’s tenant. He could not forget my mother’s shame, and did not like me. I had a little brother, Johann, and two sisters, but I was a stranger in my own family. *Ich war ein Fremder in meiner eigenen Familie!* When Johann was up to mischief, papa said: “With that child, Karl, I shall not have a moment’s peace,” and I was scolded and punished. When my sisters quarrelled, papa said: “Karl will never be an obedient boy!” and I was scolded and punished. Only my kind mother loved and caressed me. She often said to me: “Karl, come here into my room!” and she kissed me stealthily.

"Poor, poor Karl!" she said, "no one loves you, but I would not exchange you for anybody. One thing your mamma asks you," she said to me—"learn well and always be an honest man, and the good God will not forsake you!" "*Trachte nur ein ehrlicher Deutscher zu werden,*" sagte sie, "*und der liebe Gott wird dich nicht verlassen!*" And I tried. When I was fourteen and could go to communion, my mamma said to my papa: "Karl is now a big boy, Gustav. What shall we do with him?" And papa said, "I don't know!" Then mamma said: "Let us send him to town, to Mr. Schulz; let him be a shoemaker!" And papa said "All right!" *Und mein Vater sagte: "Gut!"* For six years and seven months I lived in town with the shoemaker and my master was fond of me. He said: "Karl is a good workman and will soon be my *Geselle*, my assistant." But "man proposes, God disposes." . . . In 1796 there was conscription, and all able-bodied men between eighteen and twenty-one years of age had to present themselves in the town.

'Papa and brother Johann came to town and we all went together to draw lots who should be a soldier and who should not be a soldier. Johann drew a bad number—he was to be a soldier. I drew a good number—I was not to be a soldier; and papa said: "I had an only son, and I must part with him! *Ich hatte einen einzigen Sohn, und von diesem muss ich mich trennen!*"

'I took his hand and said: "Why did you say that, papa? Come with me and I will tell you something." Papa came, and we sat down at a little table in an inn. "Bring us two *Bierkrug!*" I said, and they brought them. We drank a glass each, and brother Johann also drank.

' "Papa," I said, "don't speak like that—that you had an only son and that you must part with him. My heart is ready to jump out when I hear that! Brother Johann shall not serve. I will be soldier! . . .



No one here wants Karl, and Karl will be soldier."

"You are a good fellow, Karl Iványch!" said papa to me, and kissed me. "*Du bist ein braver Bursche!*" *sagte mir mein Vater und küsste mich!*

'And I became soldier.'

## IX

## CONTINUATION

'It was a dreadful time then, Nicholas,' continued Karl Iványch. 'Then was Napoleon. He wanted to conquer Germany, and we defended our Fatherland to the last drops of our blood! *Und wir vertheidigten unser Vaterland bis auf den letzten Tropfen Blut!*

'I was at Ulm, I was at Austerlitz, I was at Wagram! *Ich war bei Wagram!*'

'Did you really fight?' I asked, looking at him with astonishment. 'Is it possible that you also killed men?'

Karl Iványch reassured me at once on that point.

'Once a French grenadier lagged behind his fellows and fell down on the road. I came running with my musket and wished to stab him, *aber der Franzose warf sein Gewehr und rief, "Pardon!"*<sup>1</sup> and I let him go.

'At Wagram Napoleon drove us on to an island, and surrounded us so that there was no escape anywhere. For three days we had no provisions and stood up to our knees in water. That villain Napoleon did not take us and did not let us out. *Und der Bosewicht Napoleon wollte uns nicht gefangen nehmen und nicht freilassen!*

'On the fourth day, thank God, they took us prisoners and led us to a fortress. I had on blue trousers, a good cloth uniform, fifteen thalers in money, and a silver watch—a present from my papa. A French soldier took it all away. Luckily I had three

<sup>1</sup> But the Frenchman threw away his weapon and cried, 'Pardon!'

gold pieces that mamma had sewn into my vest. No one found these!

'I did not want to stop long in the fortress, and determined to run away. Once, on a great feast-day, I said to the sergeant who guarded us: "Mr. Sergeant, to-day is a great holiday, I want to keep it. Please bring two bottles of madeira and we will drink it together." When the sergeant brought the madeira and we had drunk a glass each, I took him by the hand and said: "Mr. Sergeant, perhaps you, too, have a father and a mother!" . . . He said, "I have, Mr. Mauer." "My father and mother," I said, "have not seen me for eight years, and do not know whether I am alive or whether my bones have long been lying in the damp earth. Oh, Mr. Sergeant! I have two gold pieces that were under my vest—take them and let me go. Be my benefactor, and my mamma will pray to Almighty God for you all her life."

"The sergeant drank a glass of madeira, and said: "Mr. Mauer, I like you very much and pity you, but you are a prisoner and I am a soldier!" I pressed his hand and said: "Mr. Sergeant!" *Ich druckte ihm die Hand und sagte, "Herr Sergeant!"*

'And the sergeant said: "You are a poor man, I won't take your money, but I will help you. When I go to bed, buy a pail of brandy for the soldiers and they will sleep. I won't watch you!"

'He was a kind man. I bought a pail of brandy, and when the *soldaten* were drunk, I put on my boots and an old overcoat and went softly out. I went on to the rampart and was going to jump, but there was water there and I did not want to spoil my last clothes, so I went to the gates.

'A sentinel with a musket walked *auf und ab*<sup>1</sup> and looked at me. "*Qui vive?*" *sagte er, auf einmal,*<sup>2</sup> and I kept silent. "*Qui vive?*" *sagte er zum zweiten Mal,*<sup>3</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> Up and down.

<sup>2</sup> said he, suddenly.

<sup>3</sup> He said a second time.

I was silent. "*Qui vive?*" *sagte er zum dritten Mal,*<sup>1</sup> and I ran. I jumped into the water, climbed out on the other side and cut my sticks. *Ich sprang ins Wasser, kletterte auf die andere Seite und machte mich aus dem Staube.*

'All night I ran along the road, but when it dawned I was afraid I should be recognized, and hid in some tall rye. There I knelt down, folded my hands, thanked our Heavenly Father for my escape, and fell asleep with a quiet feeling. *Ich dankte dem Allmächtigen Gott für Seine Barmherzigkeit und mit beruhigtem Gefühl schlief ich ein.*

'I woke up in the evening and went farther. Suddenly a large German wagon with a pair of black horses caught me up. In the wagon sat a well-dressed man; he smoked a pipe and looked at me. I walked slowly to let the wagon pass me, but as I walked slowly the wagon went slowly and the man looked at me. I went faster and the wagon went faster and the man looked at me. I sat down by the road, and the man stopped his horses and looked at me. "Young man," he said, "where are you going so late?" I said: "I am going to Frankfurt." "Get into my wagon, there is room, and I will take you there. . . . Why have you got nothing with you? Why is your beard not shaven and why are your clothes muddy?" he said, when I sat down beside him. "I am a poor man," I said, "I want to find a place somewhere in a factory, and my clothes are dirty because I fell in the road." "You are telling me an untruth, young man," he said, "the roads are dry now."

'I was silent.

' "Tell me the whole truth," said the kind man, "who are you and where you have come from. I like your face, and if you are an honest man I will help you."

'I told him everything. He said: "All right, young man, come to my rope-factory. I will give you work, clothes, and money, and you shall live with me."

<sup>1</sup> He said a third time.

'And I said, "All right."

'We came to the rope-factory and the kind man said to his wife: "Here is a young man who fought for his Fatherland and escaped from captivity. He has no home, no clothes, and no bread. He will live with me. Give him clean linen and feed him."

'I lived a year and a half at the rope-factory, and my master grew so fond of me that he did not want to let me go. And I was happy. I was a handsome man then. I was young, tall, blue-eyed, with a Roman nose . . . and Madame L. . . . (I can't tell her name) my master's wife, was a young and pretty lady, and she fell in love with me.

'When she saw me she said: "Mr. Maurer, how does your mamma call you?" I said, "Karlchen."

'And she said, "Karlchen, sit by me!"

'I sat down by her and she said: "Karlchen, kiss me!"

'I kissed her, and she said, "Karlchen, I love you so that I cannot bear it any longer!" and she trembled all over.'

Here Karl Iványch made a long pause, and rolling his kind blue eyes and slightly shaking his head began to smile as people do at a pleasant memory.

'Yes,' he began again, moving in his chair and wrapping his dressing-gown round him—'I have experienced much good and much evil in my life, but this is my witness,' he said, pointing to a picture of the Saviour embroidered in wool, which hung over his bed—'no one can say that Karl Iványch is not an honest man! I did not wish to repay Mr. L. . . .'s kindness to me with black ingratitude, and I decided to run away. In the evening when everybody went to bed, I wrote a letter to my master and put it on the table in my room. I took my clothes and three thalers of money, and went softly into the street. No one saw me, and I went along the road.'

## X

## CONTINUATION

‘I HAD not seen my mamma for nine years, and did not know if she was alive or if her bones were already lying in the damp earth. I went to my Fatherland. When I came to the town, I asked where Gustav Maurer lived, who was a tenant of Count Sommerblatt. I was told, “Count Sommerblatt is dead, and Gustav Maurer lives now in the High Street and keeps a liqueur shop.” I put on my new waistcoat and a good coat my employer had given me, brushed my hair well, and went to my papa’s liqueur shop. My sister Mariechen was sitting in the shop and asked what I wanted. I said, “Can I drink a glass of liqueur?” And she said, “*Vater!* A young man is asking for a glass of liqueur,” and papa said: “Serve the young man with a glass of liqueur.” I sat at the table, drank my glass of liqueur, smoked a pipe, and looked at papa, at Mariechen, and at Johann, who had also come into the shop. While we were talking papa said to me: “You, no doubt, know, young man, where our army is now stationed?” I said, “I am from the army myself, and it is stationed near Vienna.” “Our son,” said papa, “was a soldier; he has not written to us for nine years, and we do not know whether he is alive or dead. My wife always weeps about him. . . .” I smoked my pipe and said, “What was your son’s name and where did he serve? Perhaps I know him. . . .” “His name is Karl Maurer, and he served with the Austrian Jägers,” said my papa. “He is a tall and handsome man like you,” said sister Mariechen. I said: “I know your Karl!” “*Amalia!*” *sagte auf einmal mein Vater,*<sup>1</sup> “come here! Here is a young man who knows our Karl!” And my

<sup>1</sup> ‘Amalia!’ said my father suddenly.

dear mamma came from the back door. I knew her at once. "You know our Karl?" said she, and looking at me, went quite pale and trem-bl-ed. . . . "Yes, I have seen him," I said, and dared not lift my eyes to her; my heart wished to *jump*. "My Karl is alive!" said mamma. "Thank God! Where is he, my dear Karl? I should die peacefully if I could once again look at him, my beloved son, but God wishes it not"—and she cried. I could not hold out. . . . "Mamma!" I said, "I am your Karl!" And she fell into my arms.

Karl Iványch closed his eyes and his lips quivered. "Mutter!" *sagte ich*, "*ich bin ihr Sohn, ich bin ihr Karl!*" *Und sie sturzte mir in die Arme,*' he repeated when he had grown a little calmer, and he wiped the large teardrops that ran down his cheeks.

'But it was not God's will that I should end my days in my native land! I was doomed to misfortune! *Das Unglück verfolgte mich überall!* . . . I lived only three months in my native land. One Sunday I was at the coffee house, bought a mug of beer, smoked my pipe, and talked politics with my acquaintances, about the Emperor Franz, about Napoleon, about the war, and everybody spoke his opinion. Near us sat a strange gentleman in a grey overcoat, who drank coffee, smoked a pipe, and said nothing to us. *Er rauchte sein Pfeifchen und schwieg still.* When the night-watchman called ten o'clock, I took my hat, paid my money, and went home. In the middle of the night some one knocked at the door. I woke up and said: "Who's there?" "*Macht auf!*" I said: "Say who you are, and I will open." *Ich sagte: "Sagt wer ihr seid und ich werde aufmachen."* "*Macht auf im Namen des Gesetzes!*" came from behind the door, and I opened. Two soldiers with muskets stood at the door, and into the room came the stranger in the grey overcoat who had sat beside us in the coffee-house. He was a spy! *Es war ein Spion!* "Come with me," said the spy. "All

• Open!

• Open in the name of the law!

right!" I said. I put on my boots and trousers, put on my suspenders, and paced up and down the room. Something was boiling in my heart. I said: "He is a scoundrel!" When I came to the wall where my sword was hanging I suddenly seized it and said: "You are a spy: defend yourself!" "*Du bist ein Spion: vertheidige dich!*" *Ich gab einen Hieb*<sup>1</sup> to the right, *einen Hieb* to the left, and one on his head. The spy fell. I seized my portmanteau and my purse and jumped out of the window. *Ich nahm meinen Mantelsack und Beutel und sprang zum Fenster hinaus. Ich kam nach Ems.*<sup>2</sup> There I became acquainted with General Sázin. He grew fond of me, got me a passport from the ambassador, and brought me with him to Russia to teach his children. When General Sázin died, your mamma invited me. She said, "Karl Iványch! I give you my children; love them, and I will never abandon you. I will make your old age easy." Now she is no more, and everything is forgotten. For my twenty years' service I must now in my old age go out into the street to find a crust of bread. God sees this and knows this, and it is His holy will—only I am sorry to part from you, children!" Karl Iványch concluded, drawing me to him by my arm and kissing me on the head.

## XI

## THE BAD MARK

At the end of the year of mourning grandmamma had somewhat recovered from the grief that had stricken her, and began occasionally to receive visitors, especially children who were of our age.

On Lyúba's birthday, the 13th of December, Princess Kornakóva and her daughters, Mme Valákhin and Sónya, Jlinka Grap, and the two youngest Ívins, arrived before dinner.

<sup>1</sup> I gave a blow.

<sup>2</sup> I came to Ems.

The sounds of voices, laughter, and running about reached us from downstairs where that whole company had assembled, but we could not join them till we had finished our morning lessons. The list hanging in the schoolroom said: '*Lundi, de 2 à 3, maître d'histoire et de géographie*','<sup>1</sup> and it was this *maître d'histoire* whom we had to wait for, listen to, and see off, before we should be free. It was already twenty minutes past two, but the history master was as yet neither to be heard nor seen, not even in the street he had to come by, and down which I looked with a strong desire never to see him again.

'It seems as if Lébedev isn't coming to-day,' said Volódya, turning away for a moment from Smarágdov's text-book, from which he was preparing his lesson.

'God grant it, God grant it . . . for I don't know anything at all! But here, I think, he is,' I added in a dejected voice.

Volódya got up and went to the window.

'No, that's not he. That is a *gentleman*,' he said. 'Let us wait till half-past two,' he added, stretching himself and scratching the crown of his head at the same time, as he usually did when resting for a moment from his work. 'If he does not come by half-past, we can tell St. Jérôme and put away our note-books.'

'And what does he want to co-o-me for?' I said, also stretching myself, and shaking Kaydánov's history which I held in both hands, over my head.

Having nothing better to do I opened the book where the lesson was and began reading it. The lesson was a long and difficult one. I knew nothing about it, and saw that I should not have time to learn any of it, especially as I was in that excited state in which my thoughts refused to concentrate on any subject whatever.

<sup>1</sup> Monday, from 2 to 3, History and Geography master.



After the previous lesson in history (which always seemed to me the duller and hardest subject), Lébedev had complained of me to St. Jérôme, and put down a 2 in my book of marks,<sup>1</sup> and St. Jérôme had told me then that if I got less than 3 next time I should be severely punished. That 'next time' was now awaiting me, and I confess that I was considerably frightened.

I was so engrossed in reading the unknown lesson that the sound of goloshes being taken off in the hall startled me. I scarcely had time to look round before the pockmarked, and to me repellent, face and the too-familiar awkward figure of the master, in his blue swallow-tail coat, fastened up with scholastic buttons, made its appearance in the doorway.

The master slowly laid his hat on the window-sill, our exercise-books on the table, and, separating the tails of his coat with both hands (as if that was very necessary) sat down puffing, on his chair.

'Well, sirs,' he said, rubbing his perspiring hands together, 'let us first go over what was said in the previous lesson, and then I will try to acquaint you with the further events of the Middle Ages.'

That meant, 'Repeat your lessons.'

While Volódya was answering him with the freedom and assurance natural to one who knew a subject well, I went out aimlessly to the staircase and, as I could not go downstairs, very naturally, without noticing it, found myself on the landing. But just as I was about to take up my usual post of observation behind the door, Mimi, who was always the cause of my misfortunes, suddenly stumbled upon me.

'You are here?' said she, looking sternly at me, then at the door of the maids' room, and then again at me.

I felt myself thoroughly guilty for not being in the

<sup>1</sup> In Russian schools, 1 was the lowest, and 5 the highest mark given.

classroom and for being in such an improper place, so I remained silent and, having hung my head, displayed a most pathetic expression of repentance.

'No, this is beyond anything!' said Mimi. 'What are you doing here?' I kept silent. 'No, this can't be passed over,' she went on, striking the banisters with her knuckles, 'I shall tell the countess everything.'

It was five minutes to three when I returned to the classroom. The master, as if not noticing either my absence or my presence, went on explaining the next lesson to Volódya. When, after finishing his explanations, he began to put the exercise-books together and Volódya went to fetch his ticket from the next room, the comforting thought occurred to me that it was all over and I had been forgotten.

But suddenly the master turned to me with a malevolent smile.

'I hope you have learnt your lesson?' he said, rubbing his hands.

'I have, sir,' I answered.

'Be so good as to tell me something about the crusade of Saint Louis,' he said, rocking his chair and pensively looking on the ground at his feet. 'Tell me first what were the reasons that induced the French king to take the cross,' he said, raising his brows and pointing his finger at the inkstand; 'then explain the general characteristics of that crusade,' he went on, moving his whole hand as if he were trying to catch something, 'and finally, the effects of that campaign on the European countries generally,' he said, striking the left side of the table with the exercise-books—'and on the French realm in particular,' he concluded, striking the right side of the table and bending his head to that side.

I swallowed several times, coughed, bent my head to one side, and remained silent. Then I picked up a quill pen that lay on the table and began pulling it to pieces, but still kept silent.

'Let me have the quill,' said the teacher, stretching out his hand. 'It can be used yet. Well, sir?'

'Ludo . . . Car . . . Saint Louis was . . . was . . . was . . . a kind and wise Tsar . . .'

'What?'

'A Tsar. He thought of going to Jerusalem, and handed the reins of government to his mother.'

'What was her name?'

'B . . . b . . . lanka!'

'What? Bulanka?'

I gave an awkward and wry smile.

'Well, don't you know any more?' he said ironically.

I had nothing to lose, so I coughed and began to pour forth whatever came into my head. 'The master did not say anything: he swept the dust off the table with the quill he had taken from me, looked fixedly past my ear, and repeated, 'Very well, sir, very well.' I felt that I did not know anything and was not expressing myself at all as I ought to, and I was terribly pained to notice that the master did not stop or correct me.

'Why did he think of going to Jerusalem?' he said, repeating my words.

'So as . . . because . . . in order . . . so as to . . .'

I was completely confused, did not say another word, and felt that even if that rascally master were to remain silent and look inquiringly at me for a whole year, I should not be able to utter another sound. The master gazed at me for about three minutes. Then his face suddenly assumed an expression of profound sorrow, and he said in a pathetic voice to Volódya, who had just come into the room:

'Let me have the book to put down your marks.'

Volódya handed him the book, and carefully placed the ticket beside it.

The master opened the book, deliberately dipped his pen in the ink, and in his elegant handwriting put down '5' for Volódya under the headings for

Progress and Conduct. Then, holding his pen over the column for my marks, he looked at me, shook off some ink, and reflected.

Suddenly his hand made a scarcely perceptible movement, and in the first column appeared a well-written 'i' and a full-stop—another movement, and in the column for Conduct another 'i' and a full-stop appeared.

Carefully closing the marks-book, the master rose and went to the door as if he did not notice my look, in which despair, entreaty, and reproach, were expressed.

'Michael Lariónych!' I said.

'No,' he said, knowing in advance what I wished to say, 'one can't learn like that. I don't wish to take payment for nothing.'

The master put on his goloshes and a camlet overcoat, and with great care tied a scarf round his neck. As if one could take care over anything after what had happened to me! For him it was the flourish of a pen, but for me it was the greatest misfortune.

'Is your lesson over?' asked St. Jérôme, coming into the room.

'Yes.'

'Was your master satisfied with you?'

'Yes,' answered Volódya.

'What marks did you get?'

'Five.'

'And Nicholas?'

I was silent.

'Four, I think,' said Volódya.

He understood that I must be saved if only for that day. Let them punish me, only not that day when we had visitors.

'*Voyons,<sup>1</sup> messieurs!*' (St. Jérôme was in the habit of saying '*voyons!*' on every occasion), '*Faites votre toilette, et descendons.*'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Let us see.    <sup>2</sup> Make yourselves tidy and come downstairs.

## XII

## THE LITTLE KEY

WE had hardly had time to go downstairs and greet all the visitors before we were called to dinner. Papa was very cheerful (he had been winning of late). He had presented Lyúba with an expensive silver tea-service, and at dinner remembered that he had left a bonbonnière he had got for her in his wing of the house.

'Why send a servant? You had better go, Nicky,' he said to me. 'The keys are in the shell on the big table—you know . . .? Well then, take them and unlock the second drawer on the right with the largest key. There you will find a box, the sweets are in paper; bring them all here.'

'And shall I bring the cigars?' I asked, knowing that he always sent for them after dinner.

'Bring them, but mind you don't touch any of my things!' he said as I went out.

Having found the key in the place indicated, I was going to unlock the drawer, when I was arrested by a wish to find out what a tiny key attached to the same bundle opened.

On the table, leaning against its rail stood, among hundreds of different things, an embroidered portfolio with a hanging padlock, and I wanted to see whether the little key would fit it. My attempt met with complete success; the portfolio opened, and I found a whole pile of papers in it. Curiosity so persuasively urged me to see what those papers were, that I had no time to attend to the voice of conscience, but began examining the contents of the portfolio.

The childish feeling of unquestioning respect for all my elders and especially for papa, was so strong in me that my mind unconsciously refused to draw

any conclusions from what I saw. I felt that papa must be living in a quite special, beautiful, to me incomprehensible and unattainable sphere, and that for me to try to penetrate the secrets of his life would be a kind of sacrilege.

For this reason the discoveries I had almost accidentally made in papa's portfolio left no clear idea beyond a dim consciousness of having done something bad. I felt ashamed and uncomfortable.

Swayed by that feeling I wanted to lock the portfolio as quickly as possible, but I was apparently doomed to experience every kind of disaster on that memorable day. After inserting the key in the key-hole, I turned it the wrong way, and thinking it was locked, I pulled the key out and, oh horror!—only the head of the key was in my hand. I tried in vain to join it to the half that remained in the lock and by some magic to get it out from there: at last I had to accept the dreadful thought of having committed another crime, which papa must discover that very day when he returned to his study.

Mimi's complaints, the bad mark, and the little key! Nothing worse could have happened to me. Grandmother—because of Mimi's complaints—St. Jérôme for the bad mark—and papa for the key . . . and all this would come upon me no later than that very evening.

'What will become of me? Oh, oh, oh! What have I done?' I exclaimed, as I paced the soft carpet of the study. 'Eh,' I said to myself, as I took out the sweets and the cigars, *'what can't be cured must be endured'*, and I ran back to the house.

That fatalistic proverb I had heard from Nicholas in early childhood has had a beneficent and temporarily tranquillizing effect on me in all the difficult moments of my life. When I entered the dining-hall I was in a rather agitated and unnatural, but an exceedingly lively, state of mind.

## XIII

## THE TRAITRESS

AFTER dinner games were started, and I took a very lively part in them. Playing at 'Cat and Mouse' I ran awkwardly against the Kornakóvas's governess, who was playing with us, and accidentally trod on her dress and tore it. Noticing that all the girls, and especially Sónya, were very pleased to see the governess put out about it and going to the maids' room to mend her dress, I determined to afford them that pleasure over again. As a consequence of this amiable intention, as soon as the governess returned I began to gallop round her, and continued these evolutions until I found an opportune moment again to catch my heel in her skirt and tear it. Sónya and the princesses could hardly keep from laughing, which flattered my vanity most pleasantly, but St. Jérôme, who had probably noticed my manœuvres, approached and contracting his brows (a thing I could not bear) remarked that it was evidently not a good thing for me to be so lively, and that, in spite of its being a holiday, he would make me repent it.

But I was in the excited condition of one who, having lost more than he has, is afraid to make up his account and continues to stake desperately without hope of recovering his losses but merely not to allow himself time to come to his senses. With an insolent smile I turned away.

After 'Cat and Mouse' some one suggested a game which I think we used to call *Lange Nase*.<sup>1</sup> The main point of the game was for the ladies and gentlemen to sit on two rows of chairs placed opposite each other, and for each one in turn to choose one of the others.

<sup>1</sup> Long Nose.

The youngest princess chose the youngest Ívin every time, Kátya chose either Volódya or Ílinka, and Sónya every time Serězha, and to my great surprise she was not at all confused when Serězha went straight up and sat down opposite to her. She laughed her sweet, ringing laugh, and nodded to show he had guessed right. But no one chose me. To the great mortification of my vanity I realized that I was superfluous, left over, that of me, some one had to ask every time: 'Who is left over? *Oh, Nicholas! Well then, you take him.*' So, when it was my turn to come forward, I always went up either to my sister or to one of the plain princesses, and, unfortunately, was never mistaken. As to Sónya, she seemed so absorbed in Serězha Ívin that I did not exist for her at all. I don't know on what grounds I mentally designated her *traitress*, for she had never promised to choose me and not Serězha; but I was firmly convinced that she had treated me very basely indeed.

When the game was over, I noticed that the *traitress*, whom I despised, but from whom however I could not take my eyes, had gone into a corner with Serězha and Kátya, and that they were mysteriously discussing something. Creeping up behind the piano to discover their secret, I saw this: Kátya held up a cambric handkerchief as a screen by two of its ends, hiding Serězha's and Sónya's heads. 'No, you've lost; pay up now!' said Serězha. Sónya, with her arms hanging down stood in front of him like a culprit, and said, blushing; 'No, I have not lost, have I, Mlle Catherine?' 'I love the truth,' replied Kátya. 'You have lost the wager, *ma chère!*'

No sooner had Kátya uttered these words than Serězha stooped and kissed Sónya straight on her rosy lips! And Sónya laughed as if it did not matter, as if it were very amusing. Terrible!!! *Oh, crafty traitress!*



## XIV

### AN ECLIPSE

I SUDDENLY experienced a feeling of contempt for the whole female sex, and for Sónya especially. I began to assure myself that there was nothing amusing in such games, that they were only fit for *little girls*, and I longed extremely to kick over the traces and play some kind of bold prank that would astonish them all. It was not long before an opportunity presented itself.

St. Jérôme, having had a talk with Mimi, left the room. The sound of his footsteps was heard first on the stairs, and then above us in the direction of the schoolroom. It occurred to me that Mimi had told him where she had seen me during lesson-time, and that he had gone to look at my marks. I did not at that time attribute to St. Jérôme any other aim in life than the desire to punish me. I have read somewhere that children from twelve to fourteen years of age—that is, at the transition period from childhood to adolescence—are specially inclined to incendiarism and even murder. Remembering my boyhood, and especially the state of mind I was in on that, for me, unfortunate day, I can vividly realize the possibility of a most terrible crime being committed, aimlessly, without any wish to injure, but just so . . . from curiosity, or an unconscious craving for action.

There are moments when the future presents itself to one in so sombre a light that one fears to let one's thoughts dwell on it, quite ceases to let one's mind operate—tries to convince oneself that the future will not occur, and that the past has not existed. At such moments, when the mind does not consider each resolution of the will in advance, and the only incentives that remain in life are physical instincts, I can

understand that a child who, from inexperience, is specially liable to such a condition, may without the least hesitation or fear, with a smile of curiosity, lay and fan a fire under his own house, where his brothers, his father, and his mother, whom he tenderly loves, are sleeping. Under the influence of such temporary absence of thought—absence of mind almost—a peasant lad of seventeen, examining the blade of a freshly-sharpened axe near a bench on which his old father lies prone and asleep, suddenly swings the axe and with inane curiosity watches the blood that runs under the bench from the severed neck. Under the influence of the same absence of reasoning, and of instinctive curiosity, a man finds a certain pleasure in standing on the very brink of a precipice and thinking: 'What if I threw myself down!' or in putting a loaded pistol to his forehead and thinking: 'What if I pull the trigger?' or in looking at some very distinguished person, whom every one holds in servile respect, and thinking: 'What if I went up to him, took him by the nose, and said: "Now then, come along, my hearty!"'

Under the influence of just such inward agitation and absence of reflection, when St. Jérôme came downstairs and told me I had no right to be there to-day, because I had behaved and learnt so badly, and that I must go upstairs at once, I put out my tongue, and said I would not go.

For a moment St. Jérôme could not utter a word, from surprise and anger.

'*C'est bien!*' he said, following me, 'I have already several times promised you a punishment, which your grandmother wished to spare you; but now I see that nothing but the rod will make you obey, and to-day you have fully deserved it.'

He said this so loud that every one heard it. The blood rushed with extraordinary force to my heart.

• Good!

I felt how fast it beat, how the colour left my face, and how my lips trembled quite involuntarily. I suppose I looked dreadful at that moment, for St. Jérôme, avoiding my eyes, came quickly up to me and seized my arm; but as soon as I felt the touch of his hand I felt so upset that, beside myself with rage, I snatched my hand away and struck him with all my childish strength.

'What is the matter with you?' said Volódya, coming up and seeing my action with horror and amazement.

'Leave me alone!' I cried to him through my tears. 'None of you care for me, and you don't understand how unhappy I am! You are all horrid, and disgusting!' I added in a sort of transport, addressing the whole company.

But just then St. Jérôme, with a pale and resolute face, again approached me, and before I had time to resist, he had gripped both my arms as in a vice, and dragged me away. My head whirled with excitement: all I remember is that I fought desperately with my head and my knees as long as my strength lasted. I remember that my nose several times came in contact with some one's thigh, that some one's coat got into my mouth, that I was aware of some one's legs around me, and of a smell of dust and of the violet scent St. Jérôme used.

Five minutes later the door of the lumber-room was closed upon me.

'Vasili!' he said, in a disgusting, triumphant voice, 'bring some rods.'

. . . . .

## XV

### FANCIES

COULD I possibly have believed at that time that I should go on living after all the misfortunes that had befallen me, and that a time would come when I should think of them calmly . . . ?

Recalling what I had done, I could not conceive what would befall me, but I had a dim premonition that I was irreparably lost.

At first, downstairs and all around me reigned complete stillness, or at least, from the excessive agitation within me, so it seemed to me, but little by little I began to distinguish various sounds. Vasili came upstairs and throwing on the window-sill something that might have been a besom, lay down, yawning, on the settle. From downstairs came St. Jérôme's loud voice (he was no doubt talking about me), then children's voices, then laughter, running about, and in a few minutes everything in the house began to go on as before and as if no one knew or cared about my sitting in the dark box-room.

I did not cry, but something heavy as a stone lay on my heart. Thoughts and visions passed with increasing rapidity through my disordered imagination; but the recollection of the misfortune that had befallen me continually interrupted their fantastic chain and I again entered the inextricable maze of uncertainty as to the fate in store for me, of despair, and of fear.

Now the idea came into my head that there must be some unknown reason for the general dislike and even hatred of me. (At that time I was firmly convinced that everybody from my grandmother down to Philip, the coachman, hated me and found pleasure in my sufferings.) 'I must be, not the son

of my mother and father, not Volódyá's brother, but an unfortunate orphan, a foundling adopted out of charity,' I said to myself; and this absurd idea not only afforded me some sad consolation but even seemed quite plausible. It was comforting to think that I was unhappy not because I was guilty, but because such had been my fate from my very birth, and that my destiny resembled that of the unfortunate Karl Iványch.

'But why keep this any longer a secret, when I have myself seen through it?' I said to myself. 'To-morrow I will go to papa and say to him: "Papa, it is useless for you to hide the secret of my birth from me: I know it." He will say: "It can't be helped, my dear, sooner or later you would have found it out—you are not my son, but I adopted you, and if you are worthy of my love I shall never abandon you." And I shall say: "Papa, though I have no right to call you by that name—I use it now for the last time—I have always loved you and always shall, and will never forget that you are my benefactor, but I can no longer remain in your house. Here no one loves me, and St. Jérôme has vowed to destroy me. He or I must leave your house, for I can't answer for myself. I hate that man to such a degree that I am ready for anything. I shall kill him." Yes, I must say it straight out: "Papa, I shall kill him." Papa will begin to entreat me, but I shall only wave my hand and say: "No, my friend and benefactor, we cannot live together, so let me go," and I will embrace him, and tell him (for some reason in French): "*Oh, mon père, oh, mon bienfaiteur, donne-moi pour la dernière fois ta bénédiction, et que la volonté de Dieu soit faite!*"' Sitting on a trunk in the dark box-room, I wept and sobbed at this thought. But suddenly I remembered the shameful punishment that awaited me, the reality

1 'Oh, my father, oh, my benefactor, bless me for the last time, and may the will of God be done!'

presented itself to me in its true light, and my fancies instantly fled.

Now I imagined myself already free, and not in our house. I enlist in the Hussars, and go to war. Enemies rush upon me from all sides. I flourish my sabre and kill one, flourish it again and kill another—and a third. At last, exhausted by wounds and fatigue, I fall to the ground shouting: 'Victory!' I recover and walk on the Tverskóy Boulevard with my arm in a black sling. I am a general! And now the Emperor meets me and asks: 'Who is that wounded young man?' They tell him that it is the famous hero, Nicholas. The Emperor comes up to me and says, 'I thank you; I will do whatever you ask of me.' I bow respectfully and leaning on my sabre, say: 'I am happy, great Emperor, to have been able to shed my blood for my fatherland, and should like to die for it; but if you are so gracious as to allow me to ask something of you, I ask one thing only—Allow me to destroy my enemy, the foreigner. St. Jérôme. I wish to destroy my enemy, St. Jérôme.' Full of wrath I stand before him and say: 'You were the cause of my misfortune—a *genoux!*'<sup>1</sup> But suddenly it occurs to me that the real St. Jérôme may at any moment come in with the rods, and again I see myself not as a general saving his country, but as a most wretched, pitious creature.

Then the thought of God comes into my mind, and I defiantly ask Him what He is punishing me for? 'I think I have not forgotten to say my prayers morning and evening; then for what am I suffering?' I can say positively that the first step towards the religious doubts that perturbed me during my boyhood was taken by me then: not that my misfortune led me to murmur and to unbelief, but that the thought of the injustice of Providence, which entered my head at that time of complete spiritual derange-

<sup>1</sup> "To your knees!"

ment and all-day solitude, dropping like an evil seed on soft earth after rain, began rapidly to germinate and spread out its roots.

Next I imagined that I should certainly die, and vividly pictured to myself St. Jérôme's surprise on finding, instead of me, a lifeless body in the box-room. Recalling Natálya Sávisna's tales of how the souls of the dead do not leave their homes for forty days, in fancy, after my death, I flew unseen through all the rooms in grandmamma's house, and listened to Lyúba's sincere weeping, to grandmamma's sorrow, and to papa's conversation with St. Jérôme. 'He was a splendid boy!' says papa with tears in his eyes. 'Yes,' says St. Jérôme, 'but a dreadful scapegrace!' 'You should respect the dead!' papa would say; 'you were the cause of his death; you frightened him, he could not stand the disgrace you were preparing for him . . . be off, scoundrel!'

St. Jérôme will fall on his knees, weep, and beg to be forgiven. After forty days my soul will fly to heaven; there I shall see something wonderfully beautiful, white, transparent, and tall, and feel that it is my mother. That something white surrounds me, caresses me; but I feel disquiet, and don't seem to recognize her. 'If this is really you,' I say, 'show yourself to me better, so that I can embrace you!' And her voice answers me: 'We are all like this here; I cannot embrace you better. Don't you feel happy so?' 'Yes, I feel very happy, but you cannot tickle me, and I cannot kiss your hands!' 'That is unnecessary, here it is beautiful without that,' she says, and I feel that it really is beautiful, and together we fly higher and higher. At that point I seemed to awake, and find myself again on the trunk in the dark box-room, with wet cheeks, and repeating without any idea the words, '*We fly higher and higher.*' For a long time I made every possible effort to clear up to myself my position, but my mental vision presented in the

present only a dreadfully gloomy and impenetrable distance. I tried to return to those comforting, happy fancies which the consciousness of reality had interrupted, but to my astonishment, as soon as I fell into the rut of my former fancies, I found it was impossible to continue them, and--most astonishing of all--that they now no longer afforded me any pleasure.

## XVI

### AFTER GRINDING, THERE'LL BE FLOUR

I SPENT the night in the box-room, and no one came to see me; only next day, that is, on Sunday, did they move me into the little room next the classroom and lock me in again. I began to hope that my punishment would be limited to imprisonment, and my thoughts, under the influence of a sweet and invigorating sleep, the bright sunlight playing on the frosty pattern on the window-panes, and the usual day-time noises in the street, began to grow calmer. But the solitude was, all the same, very oppressive; I wanted to move about, to tell some one all that had accumulated in my soul, and there was no living being near me. The situation was the more unpleasant because, repulsive as it was to me, I could not help hearing St. Jérôme walking about in his room, and quite calmly whistling some gay tunes. I was fully convinced that he did not want to whistle at all but that he did it only to torment me.

At two o'clock St. Jérôme and Volódya went downstairs, and Nicholáy brought me my dinner. When I got into conversation with him about what I had done and what awaited me, he said: 'Eh, sir, don't worry: when the grinding 's done there will be flour.'

Though this saying, which later in life more than once kept up my spirits, did something to console me, yet the fact that they had sent me, not bread and water, but the whole dinner, including even the



pudding—cream buns—caused me serious reflections. If they had not sent me any cream buns, that would have meant that being locked up was my punishment, but it now seemed that I was not being punished yet, but only separated from the others as a harmful individual, and that my punishment still awaited me. While I was deeply engrossed in the solution of this question, the key turned in the lock of my prison, and St. Jérôme entered with a grim, official look on his face.

‘Come to your grandmother!’ he said, without looking at me.

I wished before leaving the room to brush the sleeves of my jacket, which were smeared with chalk, but St. Jérôme said that that was quite unnecessary, as if I were in such a pitiful moral condition that it was not worth troubling about my appearance.

Kátya, Lyúba, and Volódya looked at me, as St. Jérôme led me by the arm through the music room, with just the expression with which we were accustomed to look at the convicts who were led past our windows on Mondays; and when I went up to grand-mamma’s chair intending to kiss her hand, she turned away from me, and hid her hand under her mantilla.

‘Yes, my dear,’ she said, after a protracted silence, during which she scrutinized me from my feet to my head with such a look that I did not know where to turn my eyes or put my hands. ‘I may well say that you value my love highly and are a real comfort to me! M. St. Jérôme who, at my request,’ she added, drawling out each word, ‘undertook your education, does not wish to remain in my house any longer. Why? Because of you, my dear! I hoped you would be grateful,’ she continued after a pause, and in a tone that showed that her speech had been prepared beforehand, ‘for his care and trouble, that you would be able to value his services, yet you, a little urchin, you a chit of a boy, have dared to lift your hand against

him. Very good! Splendid!! I too begin to think you are incapable of understanding honourable treatment, and that for you lower methods are necessary. . . . Beg pardon at once,' she added in a tone of severe command, pointing to St. Jérôme: 'Do you hear?'

I looked in the direction shown by grandmamma's hand, and catching sight of St. Jérôme's coat, turned away and did not budge from the spot, beginning again to feel my heart sink.

'Well? Don't you hear what I say to you?'

I trembled all over, but did not move.

'Nicky!' said grandmamma, probably noticing the inward sufferings I was enduring. 'Nicky,' she said, not so much in a commanding as in a tender tone, 'can this be you?'

'Grandmamma, I won't ask his forgiveness for anything in the world. . . .' I said, and suddenly stopped, feeling that I should not be able to restrain the tears that were choking me, if I said another word.

'I order you, I ask you. Why don't you?'

'I . . . I . . . won't . . . I can't!' I uttered, and the suppressed sobs that had accumulated in my breast suddenly broke down the barrier that held them back, and I burst into a desperate flood of tears.

'*C'est ainsi que vous obéissez à votre seconde mère, c'est ainsi que vous reconnaissez ses bontés!*'<sup>1</sup> said St. Jérôme in a tragic voice, '*A genoux!*'<sup>2</sup>

'Oh, God, if she saw this!' said grandmamma, turning away from me and wiping the tears that appeared in her eyes, 'if she saw this. . . . All is for the best. No, she could not have endured this sorrow . . .!'

And grandmamma wept more and more. I too wept, but did not think of begging pardon.

<sup>1</sup> 'This is the way you obey your second mother, this is how you repay her kindness!'

<sup>2</sup> 'To your knees!'

*'Tranquillisez-vous au nom du ciel, Mme. la Comtesse!'*<sup>1</sup> said St. Jérôme.

But grandmamma no longer listened to him; she covered her face with her hands, and her sobs soon passed into hiccoughs and hysterics. Mimi and Gáša ran into the room with frightened faces, there was an odour of spirits, and sounds of running and whispering suddenly arose all over the house.

'Admire what you have done!' said St. Jérôme, as he led me upstairs.

'Oh, my God, what have I done? What a dreadful criminal I am!'

Scarcely had St. Jérôme gone downstairs after ordering me to my room than, without considering what I was doing, I ran down the broad staircase which led to the front door.

Whether I meant to run away from home altogether or to drown myself, I don't remember; I only know that I ran farther and farther down the stairs, with my hands up to my face so as to see no one.

'Where are you going?' a familiar voice suddenly asked. 'It's just you that I want, my dear!'

I wanted to run past him, but papa caught hold of my arm and said severely:

'Come along with me, my dear! How did you dare to touch the portfolio in my study?' he said, leading me into the small sitting-room. 'Eh? Why don't you speak, eh?' he added, taking me by the ear.

'I am sorry,' I said, 'I don't myself know what came over me.'

'Ah, you don't know what came over you, don't know, don't know, don't know, don't know . . .' he repeated, pulling my ear at each word. 'Will you in future poke your nose where you shouldn't? Will you? Will you?'

Though I felt acute pain in my ear, I did not cry, but experienced a pleasant moral sensation. As soon

<sup>1</sup> 'Calm yourself for heaven's sake, Countess!'

as papa let go my ear, I seized his hand and, with tears in my eyes, began to cover it with kisses.

'Beat me again!' I said through my tears, 'Harder, more painfully! I am a good-for-nothing, horrid, miserable wretch!'

'What is the matter with you?' he said, pushing me slightly away.

'No, I won't go away for anything,' I said, clinging to his coat. 'Everybody hates me, I know they do, but for heaven's sake listen to me. Protect me, or turn me out of the house, I cannot live with him. *He* tries to humiliate me in every way, orders me to kneel before him, wants to whip me. I cannot stand it. I am not a little boy, I shall not be able to bear it. I shall die. I shall kill myself. *He* told grandmamma that I was a good-for-nothing, and now she is ill, she will die because of me! I . . . can't . . . with . . . him. . . . For heaven's sake you whip me . . . why torment. . . .'

Tears were choking me. I sat down on the sofa and, unable to say more, fell with my head on his knees, sobbing so that it seemed to me I should die that very moment.

'What's it about, round-cheeks?' asked papa sympathetically, as he leaned over me.

'*He*—my tyrant . . . my torturer . . . I shall die! No one loves me!' I uttered with difficulty, and went into convulsions.

Papa took me in his arms and carried me to my bedroom. I fell asleep.

When I awoke it was already very late; a single candle burnt by my bedside, and in the room sat our family doctor, Mimi, and Lyúba. Their faces showed that they were alarmed about my health. But I felt so well and so easy after a twelve-hours' sleep that I should have jumped out of my bed at once, if I had not felt that it would be unpleasant to disturb their conviction that I was very ill.

## XVII

### HATRED

Yes, this was a feeling of real hatred—not the hatred that is only written about in novels and which I do not believe in, hatred that is supposed to find pleasure in doing some one harm—but the hatred that inspires you with irresistible aversion for a person who yet deserves your respect, and which causes his hair, his neck, his gait, the sound of his voice, all his limbs and movements to seem repulsive to you, while at the same time some incomprehensible power draws you to him, and compels you to follow his slightest action with restless attention. Such was the feeling I experienced for St. Jérôme.

St. Jérôme had lived with us already for a year and a half. When I now think of him in cold blood, I find him to have been a good Frenchman, but French in the highest degree. He was not stupid (he was rather well-informed) and fulfilled his duties towards us conscientiously, but he had the distinctive characteristics of his fellow countrymen which are so contrary to the Russian character—frivolous egotism, vanity, insolence, and ignorant self-confidence. All this greatly displeased me. Needless to say, grand-mamma had explained to him her views on corporal punishment, and he did not dare to beat us; but in spite of this he often threatened us, especially me, with the rod, and pronounced the word *fouetter*<sup>1</sup> something like *fouatter* as disgustingly and with such an intonation as if it would give him the greatest pleasure to flog me.

I did not at all fear the pain of the punishment which I had never felt, but the mere idea that

<sup>1</sup> To flog.

St. Jérôme might strike me threw me into a distressing condition of suppressed despair and fury.

It had happened that Karl Iványch, in a moment of irritation, had personally corrected us with a ruler or with his braces, but I remember that without the least annoyance. Even at the time of which I am speaking (when I was fourteen) if Karl Iványch had happened to give me a beating, I should have borne his blows with equanimity. I was fond of Karl Iványch, I remembered him as long as I could remember myself, and was used to regard him as one of our family; but St. Jérôme was a proud self-satisfied man for whom I felt nothing but the involuntary respect with which all grown-up people inspired me. Karl Iványch was a funny old *usher*, whom I loved from my soul, but whom all the same I regarded as beneath myself in my childish idea of social standing.

St. Jérôme, on the other hand, was an educated and handsome young dandy, who tried to put himself on a level with everybody.

Karl Iványch always scolded and punished us calmly; one saw that he considered it a necessary but unpleasant duty. St. Jérôme, on the contrary, liked to drape himself in the garb of an instructor; it was evident when he punished us, that he did it rather for his own satisfaction than for our benefit. He was carried away by his own importance. His florid French phrases, which he pronounced with a strong accent on the last syllable, and with circumflex accents, were inexpressibly repulsive to me. Karl Iványch, when he was angry, used to say: 'puppet-show', 'vicket poy', 'Spanish fly'. St. Jérôme called us '*mauvais sujet*',<sup>1</sup> '*vilain garnement*'<sup>2</sup> and so on—epithets which offended my self-esteem.

Karl Iványch made us kneel facing the corner, and the punishment consisted in the physical pain occa-

<sup>1</sup> 'Bad lot.'

<sup>2</sup> 'Blackguard.'

sioned by such an attitude. St. Jérôme threw out his chest, made a majestic gesture with his hand, and cried in a tragic voice: '*A genoux, mauvais sujet!*' and ordered us to kneel facing him and beg his pardon. The punishment consisted in the humiliation.

They did not punish me, and no one even mentioned what had happened to me, but I could not forget all I had endured during those two days—the despair, shame, fear, and hatred. Although St. Jérôme after that seemed to have given me up as a bad job, and paid hardly any attention to me, I could not accustom myself to regard him with indifference. Every time our eyes happened to meet, I felt that my looks too clearly expressed animosity, and I hastened to assume an air of indifference; but when I thought that he noticed my simulation, I blushed and turned aside.

In a word, it was inexpressibly hard for me to have any relations with him at all.

## XVIII

### THE MAIDS' ROOM

I FELT more and more lonely, and my chief pleasures were solitary reflections and observations. Of the subject of my reflections I will tell in the next chapter, but the chief scene of my observations was the maids' room, in which what was for me a very interesting and touching romance was proceeding. The heroine of that romance, needless to say, was Másha. She was in love with Vasili, who had known her when she was still living at home, and had then already promised to marry her. Fate which had separated them five years before, had brought them together again in grandmamma's house, but had set a barrier to

<sup>1</sup> 'On your knees, you bad lot!'

their mutual affection in the person of Nicholáy, Másha's uncle, who would not hear of his niece marrying Vasíli, whom he spoke of as an 'unsuitable and uncontrolled man'.

This barrier had the effect of making Vasíli, formerly rather cool and careless in the matter, suddenly fall in love with Másha—as much in love as ever a domestic serf in a pink shirt, with pomaded hair, and trained as a tailor, is capable of being in love.

Though the manifestations of his love were very strange and inappropriate (for instance, on meeting Másha he always tried to hurt her: either pinched her, slapped her with the palm of his hand, or squeezed her so tightly that she could hardly draw her breath) yet his love was sincere, as was proved by the fact that when Nicholáy definitely refused him the hand of his niece, Vasíli started drinking, began loafing about in public houses, kicked up rows, and in a word, behaved so badly that he more than once underwent the humiliation of being locked up in the police-station. But all these actions of his and their consequences were, it seemed, meritorious in Másha's eyes and only increased her love for him. When Vasíli was locked up, Másha's eyes were not dry for days on end: she wept, complained of her bitter fate to Gásha who took a lively interest in the unfortunate lovers' affairs, and, regardless of her uncle's scoldings and beatings, ran secretly to the police-station to visit and console her friend.

Do not disdain, reader, the company into which I am introducing you. If the chords of love and sympathy have not slackened in your soul, sounds will be met with in the maids' room to which they can respond. Whether you care to follow me or not, I am going to the staircase landing from which I can see all that goes on in the maids' room. There is the ledge of the stove on which stand a flat-iron, a dress-



maker's papier-mâché dummy with a broken nose; a wash-tub and a jug; there is the window-sill on which lie in disorder a bit of black wax, a skein of silk, a half-eaten green cucumber, and a sweetmeat box; and there is the large red table on which, on an unfinished piece of needlework, lies a weight-cushion made of a chintz-covered brick. At that table *she* sits in the pink gingham dress that I like, and with a blue kerchief which particularly attracts my attention. She is sewing, occasionally stopping to scratch her head with her needle or to trim the candle; and I look on and think: Why was she not born a lady, with those bright blue eyes, that immense plait of auburn hair and full bust? How well it would suit her to sit in the drawing-room with pink ribbons on her head and in a crimson silk gown—not like Mimi's, but like one I saw on the Tverskóy Boulevard. She would then have worked at an embroidery-frame, and I should have been looking at her in the mirror, and doing whatever she wanted; helping her on with her cloak or handing her her meals myself.

And what a drunken face and repulsive figure that Vasíli has, in his tight coat put on over the dirty pink shirt he wears outside his trousers! In every movement of his body, in every curve of his back, I seem to see clear indications of the horrid punishment he had undergone. . . .

'What, again, Vása?' said Másha, sticking her needle into the cushion and not looking up at Vasíli as he entered.

'And what d'you think? As if any good could come from *him*!' answered Vasíli. 'If only he had settled it one way or other. As it is I'm going to ruin for nothing, and all through *him*.'

'Will you have some tea?' asked Nadězha, another housemaid.

'Thank you kindly. . . . And why does he hate me, that thief, your uncle, what for? Because I have

proper clothes, for my smartness, for my way of walking, in a word. . . . Oh, gracious!' Vasíli said, flourishing his arm.

'One should be submissive,' said Másha, biting off a thread, 'but you always . . .'

'I can't bear it any longer, that's what it is!'

At that moment I heard the sound of grand-mamma's door and the voice of Gáša, grunbling as she came up the stairs.

'Give satisfaction indeed, when she doesn't herself know what she wants. . . . What a confounded life, a prisoner's life! God forgive me!' she muttered, swinging her arms.

'My respects, Agatha Mikháylovna!' said Vasíli to her, rising as she entered.

'Oh, get along! I have other things than your respects to think of!' she replied, looking at him angrily. 'And why do you come here? Is the maids' room the place for a man?'

'I wanted to ask about your health,' said Vasíli timidly.

'I shall die soon—that's what my health is!' shouted Agatha Mikháylovna at the top of her voice and still more angrily.

Vasíli began to laugh.

'There's nothing to laugh about—when I tell you to be off, get away! Look at the dirty lout! Wants to marry—the villain! Now then, be off, quick march!'

And Agatha Mikháylovna, stamping her feet, went to her own room, banging the door so that the window-panes rattled.

She could be heard for a long time behind the partition, abusing everything and everybody and cursing her life. She threw her things about, pulled the ears of her pet cat, and at last the door opened a little way and the cat, pitcously miaowing, was flung out by her tail.

'It looks as if I had better come some other time

for a cup of tea,' said Vasli in a whisper. 'Good-bye till the next pleasant meeting.'

'Never mind,' said Nadēzha with a wink, 'I'll just go and see if the samovar is boiling.'

'Yes, I'll make an end of it somehow,' continued Vasili, seating himself closer to Másha, as soon as Nadēzha had left the room. 'Either I'll go straight to the countess and tell her so and so, or I'll throw everything up and run away to the end of the world. I swear I will.'

'And how shall I be left . . .?'

'It's only you I am sorry to leave, or else I'd have been free lo-o-ong ago, really, really!'

'Why don't you bring me your shirts to wash, Vása?' said Másha, after a short pause. 'Just look how dirty it is,' she added, taking hold of his shirt-collar.

At that moment grandmamma's bell rang, and Gáša came out of her room.

'Now then you wretched fellow, what are you trying to get from her?' she said, pushing Vasli, who had risen hurriedly at sight of her, to the door. 'See what you've brought the girl to, and you go on bothering her. . . . It seems you think it fun to look at her tears, you starveling. Get out! Don't leave a trace of yourself here! And what have you found in him?' she went on, turning to Másha. 'Hasn't your uncle beaten you enough to-day on his account? No, it's always your own way! "I won't have any one but Vasili Grúskov." Fool!'

'Yes, I won't have any one else. I don't love any one else, even if you killed me!' said Másha, suddenly bursting into tears.

I looked long at Másha as she lay on a trunk, wiping her tears with her kerchief, and I tried by all manner of means to change my opinion of Vasili, and sought for a point of view from which it was possible for him to appear to her so attractive. But though I

sincerely sympathized with Másha in her sorrow, I could not at all understand how so charming a creature as, in my eyes, she was, could love Vasíli.

When I am grown up, I thought to myself, after I had gone to my room, Petróvskoe will belong to me, and Vasíli and Másha will be my serfs. I shall be sitting in my study and smoking my pipe. Másha will pass with a flat-iron on her way to the kitchen. I shall say: 'Call Másha here.' She will come, and nobody else will be in the room. . . . Suddenly Vasíli will enter and, seeing Másha, will say: 'It's all up with me!' and Másha also will begin to cry, and I shall say: 'Vasíli, I know you love her and she loves you. Here are a thousand rubles for you. Marry her, and God grant you happiness!' And I myself shall go into the sitting-room. . . .

Among the innumerable thoughts and fancies that pass through the mind and the imagination without any trace, there are some which leave a deep, pronounced groove, so that often when you no longer remember the essence of the thought, you are conscious that something good has been in your mind, you feel the trace left by the thought and try to reproduce it. A deep trace of that kind was left in my soul by the thought of sacrificing my own feeling in favour of Másha's happiness, which she could find only in marriage with Vasíli.

## XIX

### BOYHOOD

It will hardly be believed what were my favourite and most constant subjects of reflection during boyhood—so incompatible were they with my age and position. But in my opinion the incompatibility of a man's position with his moral activity is the surest indication of his searching for truth.

For a year, during which I led a solitary, self-concentrated mental life, all the abstract questions concerning man's destiny, future life, and the immortality of the soul, had presented themselves to me; and my feeble, childish mind, with all the ardour of inexperience, tried to clear up these questions the formulation of which is the highest stage the human mind can reach, but the solution of which is not granted to it.

It seems to me that the human mind in each separate individual follows in its development the same road along which it has developed during many generations, and that the thoughts which serve as basis for various philosophic theories are indivisible parts of that mind, but that each man more or less clearly realized them before he knew of the existence of the philosophic theories.

These thoughts presented themselves to my mind so clearly and definitely that I even tried to apply them to life, imagining that I was the first discoverer of such great and useful truths.

At one time the idea occurred to me that happiness does not depend on external causes, but on our relation to those causes, and that a man accustomed to endure sufferings cannot be unhappy—and to inure myself to hardship, regardless of the severe pain I felt, I used to hold Tatishchev's dictionaries out at arm's length for five minutes at a time, or go into the box-room and lash my bare back with a rope so painfully that tears involuntarily appeared in my eyes.

At another time, remembering that death awaited me at any hour and at any moment, I understood, wondering that people had not understood it before, that one can only be happy by enjoying the present and not thinking of the future, and, for three days, under the influence of this idea, I neglected to learn my lessons and did nothing but lie on my bed.

enjoying myself by reading a novel, and eating ginger-bread made with honey, on which I spent my last coins.

Another time, standing before a blackboard and drawing various figures on it with chalk, I was suddenly struck by the thought: 'Why does symmetry please the eye? What is symmetry?' 'It is an innate feeling,' I replied to myself. 'On what is it based? Is there symmetry in everything in life?' 'On the contrary—this is life'; and I drew an oval figure on the board—'when life ends the soul passes into eternity—this is eternity'; and I drew a line from one side of the oval figure right to the edge of the board. 'Why is there no such line on the other side? Yes, indeed, how can eternity be only on one side? We must have existed before this life, though we have lost the recollection of it.'

This reflection, which seemed to me exceedingly novel and clear, and whose logic I can now perceive only with difficulty, pleased me extremely, and taking a sheet of paper I intended to expound it in writing, but thereupon such a host of ideas suddenly collected in my head that I was obliged to get up and walk about the room. When I came to the window my attention was attracted to the horse, used for carrying water, which the coachman was just then harnessing, and my thoughts all centred on the question: what animal or man that horse's soul would enter when it died? Just then Volódya, as he passed through the room, smiled on seeing me pondering over something, and that smile was sufficient for me to understand that all I was thinking about was awful nonsense.

I have only related this case, which for some reason seemed to me memorable, in order to let the reader see what my reflections were like.

But by none of my philosophical tendencies was I so carried away as by scepticism, which at one time led me to the verge of insanity. I imagined that

besides myself nobody and nothing existed in the universe, that objects were not objects at all, but images which appeared only when I paid attention to them, and that as soon as I left off thinking of them, these images immediately disappeared. In a word, I coincided with Schelling in the conviction that not objects exist but my relation to them. There were moments when, under the influence of this *idée fixe*, I reached such a state of insanity that I sometimes looked rapidly round to one side, hoping to catch emptiness (*néant*) unawares where I was not.

A pitiful, trivial spring of mental action is the mind of man! My feeble mind could not penetrate the impenetrable, and in that effort lost, one by one, the convictions which, for my life's happiness, I ought never to have dared to disturb.

From all this heavy moral toil I obtained nothing except a flexibility of mind that weakened my will-power, and a habit of constant moral analysis, destructive to freshness of feeling and clarity of reason.

Abstract thoughts form as a result of man's capacity to seize a consciousness of the state of his soul at a given moment, and to transfer that perception to his memory. My fondness for abstract reasoning developed consciousness in me so unnaturally that often when I began thinking about the simplest things, I fell into the vicious circle of analysis of my thoughts, and I no longer thought about the original question that had occupied me, but thought about what I was thinking about. I asked myself: 'What am I thinking about?' and answered: 'I am thinking about what I am thinking. And now what am I thinking about? I am thinking that I think about what I am thinking about,' and so on. I had thought myself out of my wits.

However, the philosophical discoveries I made flattered my vanity extremely: I often imagined myself a great man, discovering new truths for the benefit

of mankind, and regarded the rest of humanity with a proud consciousness of my own worth: but strangely enough when I encountered those other mortals I felt shy of each of them, and the higher I set myself in my own estimation, the less was I capable not only of exhibiting the consciousness of my own dignity, but even of accustoming myself to avoid being ashamed of my simplest words and movements.

## XX

## VOLÓDYA

YES, the farther I advance in the description of this period of my life, the more painful and difficult it becomes for me. Very rarely among the memories of this time do I find moments of genuine warm feeling such as brightly and constantly lit up the commencement of my life. Involuntarily I wish to pass quickly over the desert of my boyhood, and to reach the happy time when the truly tender and noble feeling of friendship brightly lit up the end of that period, and formed the beginning of a new one full of delight and poetry—the period of adolescence.

I will not follow my reminiscences hour by hour, but will cast a rapid glance at the chief of them, from the time to which I have brought my story to the time of my coming in touch with the exceptional man who had a definite and beneficent influence on my character and tendencies.

Volódya is just entering the University. Masters already come to him separately, and I listen with envy and involuntary respect when he, briskly tapping the blackboard with the chalk, talks of functions, sines, co-ordinates, and so on, which seem to me the expressions of an unattainable wisdom. At last, one Sunday after dinner, all the masters and two professors assemble in grandmamma's room, and in the



presence of papa and several visitors have a rehearsal of the University examination in which, to grand-mamma's great delight, Volódya evinces extraordinary knowledge. Some questions are put to me too, but I cut a very poor figure, and the professors evidently try to hide my ignorance from grand-mamma, which confuses me still more. However, little attention is paid to me: I am only fifteen, so there is still a year before my examination. Volódya only comes down to dinner, and spends whole days and even evenings upstairs studying—not compulsorily, but at his own wish. He is extremely ambitious, and wants to pass his examination not just moderately, but excellently.

And now the day of the first examination has arrived; Volódya puts on a blue dress-coat with gilt buttons, a gold watch, and patent-leather boots. Papa's phaeton drives up to the door; Nicholáy throws back the apron, and Volódya and St. Jérôme drive to the University. The girls, especially Kátya, look out of the window with joyful, ecstatic faces at Volódya's graceful figure, as he gets into the phaeton. Papa says: 'God grant it, God grant it!' and grand-mamma has also dragged herself to the window, and with tears in her eyes makes the sign of the cross towards Volódya, and murmurs something until the phaeton turns the corner of the street.

Volódya returns. Everybody questions him impatiently: 'Well? Was it all right? What were your marks?' but by Volódya's happy face one sees that it is all right. He has got a 'five'. Next day he is seen off with the same wishes for his success and the same fears, and is met with the same impatience and joy. Nine days pass in that manner. On the tenth day the last and most difficult examination, in Scripture, takes place. Every one stands by the window and awaits Volódya with yet greater impatience. It is already two o'clock, and he is not back yet.

'Oh, Lord! Gracious goodness!! Here they are, here they are!' shouts Lyúba, pressing her face to the window.

And actually in the phaeton beside St. Jérôme sits Volódya, but no longer in his blue dress-suit and grey cap, but in a student's uniform, with a blue embroidered collar, a three-cornered hat, and a short gilt sword at his side.<sup>1</sup>

'Oh, that you were alive!' exclaims grandmamma, seeing Volódya in his uniform, and she faints away and falls.

Volódya, with a radiant face runs into the hall, kisses and embraces me, Lyúba, Mimi, and Kátya, who blushes up to her ears. Volódya is beside himself with joy. And how handsome he looks in that uniform! How well the blue collar goes with his faintly appearing little black moustache! What a long, thin waist he has, and what a noble bearing! On that memorable day everybody dines in grandmamma's room, and all faces shine with joy. With the pudding-course the butler, with a decorously majestic and yet jovial countenance, brings in a bottle of champagne wrapped in a napkin. Grandmamma for the first time since mamma's death drinks champagne and empties a full glass, as she congratulates Volódya, and again she weeps with joy as she looks at him.

Volódya now drives out alone in his own equipage, receives his own acquaintances, smokes, goes to balls, and I myself even see how he and his friends once drink two bottles of champagne in his room, and hear them toast some mysterious persons at each glass, and dispute to whom should accrue '*le fond de la bouteille*.'<sup>2</sup> However, he dines regularly at home, and after dinner makes himself comfortable in the sitting-room as of old, and always converses mysteri-

<sup>1</sup> This was the proper uniform of a University student at the time.

<sup>2</sup> The last of the bottle.

ously with Kátya; but from what I, a non-participant in their conversation, can hear, they talk only of the heroes and heroines of novels they have read, about jealousy, and love, and I can't at all make out what they can find interesting in such conversations, and why they smile so subtly and dispute so warmly.

In general I notice that besides the understandable friendship between companions of childhood, certain peculiar relations exist between them, which separate them from us, and mysteriously unite them with each other.

## XXI

## KÁTYA AND LYÚBA

KÁTYA is sixteen; she is grown up. The angularity of her figure, her shyness, and the awkwardness of movement natural to the age of transition, have given place to the harmonious freshness and grace of a budding flower; but she has not changed. She has the same light-blue eyes and smiling look, the same straight nose almost in line with her forehead, and with firm nostrils, the same brightly smiling lips, the same tiny dimples in the clear, rosy cheeks, the same white little hands . . . and, I don't know why, to be called a *clean little girl* still suits her extremely well. The only new things about her are her thick plait of light-brown hair which she wears like a grown-up person, and her young bosom, the development of which evidently pleases and confuses her.

Though Lyúba has always grown up and been educated with her, she is in all respects quite a different girl.

Lyúba is not tall, and as a result of rickets her feet still turn in, and she has a horrid figure. There is nothing beautiful about her whole person except her eyes, but they are really beautiful—large, black, and

with such an irresistibly pleasant expression of importance and naïveté that they cannot fail to arrest one's attention. Lyúba is simple and natural in everything, while Kátya seems to be trying to resemble some one else. Lyúba always looks straight at you, and sometimes, when she fixes her large black eyes on some one, she does not lower them for so long that she gets scolded for being impolite. Kátya, on the contrary, droops her lashes, screws up her eyes, and declares that she is short-sighted, though I know very well that she sees excellently. Lyúba does not like to show off before strangers, and when any one kisses her before visitors, she pouts and says she can't bear *sentimentality*. Kátya on the other hand always grows particularly affectionate to Mimi in the presence of visitors, and likes walking up and down the ball-room with her arms about some other girl. Lyúba is a terrible laugh, and sometimes in a fit of laughter swings her arms and runs about the room; Kátya on the contrary covers her mouth with her handkerchief or her hands when she begins to laugh. Lyúba always sits straight and walks with her arms hanging down; Kátya holds her head a little on one side, and walks with her arms folded. Lyúba is always extremely pleased when she manages to have a talk with a grown-up man, and says she will certainly marry a hussar; Kátya says all men are disgusting to her, that she will never marry, and she completely changes, as if frightened, when a man speaks to her. Lyúba is always indignant with Mimi for lacing her up in tight corsets 'so that one can't breathe', and she is fond of eating; Kátya on the contrary often thrusts a finger under the peak of her bodice to show us how much too wide it is, and she eats remarkably little. Lyúba likes drawing heads; but Kátya draws only flowers and butterflies. Lyúba plays Field's concertos and some of Beethoven's sonatas with great clearness; Kátya plays variations

and vales, confusing the time, thumping, and using the pedal continually, and before beginning to play anything takes three arpeggios very feelingly.

But Kátya, as I then thought, more resembled a grown-up woman, and therefore pleased me most.

## XXII

## PAPA

PAPA is peculiarly cheerful since Volódya entered the University and comes oftener than usual to dine at grandmamma's. However the cause of his cheerfulness, as I learnt from Nicholáy, is that he has lately won very large sums at cards. It even happens that before going to his club in the evening he comes in to us, sits down at the piano, gathers us round him and, beating time with his soft boots (he hates heels, and never has any on his boots) sings gipsy songs. And then you should see the comical raptures of Lyúba, his pet, who adores him. Sometimes he comes into the schoolroom and with a serious look listens to me saying my lesson, but from some words he uses to correct me I notice that he does not know much of what I am being taught. Sometimes he stealthily winks and makes signs to us when grandmamma begins to scold and gets angry with everybody without reason. 'Well, we *did* catch it, children!' he says afterwards. In general he is gradually descending in my eyes from the unattainable height on which my childish imagination had placed him. I kiss his large white hand with the same sincere feeling of love and respect, but I already begin to let myself think about him, criticize his actions; and thoughts the existence of which frighten me, involuntarily enter my head about him. I shall never forget an occasion that suggested many such thoughts and caused me much moral suffering.

Late one evening he came into the drawing-room in a black dress-coat and white waistcoat to take Volódya, who was in his room dressing, to a ball. Grandmamma was waiting in her bedroom for Volódya to come and show himself to her (she was in the habit of letting him come to her before every ball for her to bless him, look at him, and give him advice). Mimi and Kátya were walking up and down the music-room which was lighted by a single lamp, and Lyúba was at the piano practising Field's second concerto, mama's favourite piece of music.

I have never seen in any one else so striking a family likeness as my sister's to my mother. This resemblance was neither in her features nor her figure, but in something indefinite: in her hands, in her way of walking, and especially in her voice and certain expressions. When Lyúba was cross and said: 'They keep one a whole age,' she pronounced the words 'a whole age,' which mamma had also been in the habit of using, so that one almost heard mamma's long-drawn 'wh-o-o-le age'; but the likeness was most striking in the way she played the piano, and in all her movements connected with it: she arranged her dress just as mamma used to, she turned the pages of the music in the same way, by the top corner with her left hand, she struck the keys with her fist in vexation just in the same way when she failed to get some difficult passage right, and said, 'Oh, Lord!' and there was the same inimitable delicacy and precision in her playing of that beautiful music of Field's, so appropriately called *jeu perlé*, the charm of which not all the hocus-pocus of the newest pianists can make us forget.

Papa entered the room with his short quick steps and went up to Lyúba, who stopped playing when she saw him.

'No, go on, Lyúba, go on!' he said, making her sit down. 'You know how I like to hear you . . .'

Lyúba went on playing and papa sat for a long time opposite her, resting his head on his hand; then he quickly jerked his shoulder, rose, and began pacing up and down the room. Every time he reached the piano he stopped and looked long and intently at Lyúba. By his movements and manner of walking I saw that he was agitated. After crossing the room several times he stopped behind Lyúba's chair, kissed her black hair, and then turned quickly and continued to pace the room. When, having finished the piece, Lyúba went up to him with the question: 'Was it all right?' he silently took her head and began kissing her on her forehead and eyes with such tenderness as I had never seen in him before.

'Oh, gracious heavens! You are crying!' Lyúba said suddenly, letting go of his watch-chain and fixing her large, wondering eyes on his face. 'Forgive me, darling papa, I had quite forgotten that it was *mamma's piece*.'

'No, my dear, you must play it often!' said he in a voice quivering with emotion, 'if you only knew how much good it does me to weep with you.'

He kissed her again and, trying to overcome his agitation, went with a jerk of his shoulder out of the door that led through a passage to Volódya's room.

'Voldemar! Will you soon be ready?' he shouted, stopping in the middle of the passage. At that moment Másha, the maid, was passing and, taken aback on seeing her master, lowered her eyes and wanted to go round him. He stopped her.

'You get handsomer every day!' he said leaning towards her.

Másha blushed and lowered her head still more.

'Allow me . . .' she whispered.

'Voldemar, will you be long?' papa repeated, jerking his shoulder and coughing, when Másha had passed him and he saw me. . . .

I love my father, but a man's mind lives indepen-

dently of his heart, and often harbours thoughts that hurt his feelings, and are incomprehensible to him and cruel. And though I try to avoid them, such thoughts come to me. . . .

## XXIII

## GRANDMAMMA

GRANDMAMMA gets weaker from day to day. Her bell, Gáša's grumbling voice and the slamming of doors are oftener heard in her room, and she no longer receives us in her sitting-room seated in her lounge chair, but in her bedroom on the high bed with lace-trimmed pillows. When I greet her I notice a pale, yellowish, shiny swelling on her hand, and in the room the same oppressive odour I had smelt five years ago in mamma's room. The doctor comes to her three times a day, and several consultations have taken place. But her character, her proud, ceremonious bearing towards every one in the house and especially towards papa, have not changed at all; she still drawls her words in the same way, raises her eyebrows, and says, 'my dear'.

But for several days now they have not let us go to see her, when one morning, at lesson time, St. Jérôme offers to let me go for a drive with Lyúba and Kátya. Although as I get into the sledge I notice that straw has been laid under grandmamma's windows and that some strange men in blue coats are standing near our gates, I can't at all understand why they send us out for a drive at such an unusual hour. This day during the whole drive Lyúba and I are for some reason in a particularly merry mood, and every simple occurrence, every word, and every movement, makes us laugh.

A hawker clutching his tray crosses the street at a trot, and we laugh. A poor, tattered sledge-driver,



flourishing the end of his reins, overtakes our sledge at a gallop, and we burst into laughter. Philip's whip catches in the sledge runner, he turns and says: 'Oh, bother!' and we are ready to die with laughter. Mimi, with a dissatisfied look, says that only silly people laugh without reason, and Lyúba, crimson with efforts to suppress her laughter, looks at me stealthily. Our eyes meet—and we burst into such Homeric laughter that tears come into our eyes, and we are unable to restrain the fits of laughter that choke us. Hardly have we quieted down than I look at Lyúba and utter a catchword much in favour among us at the time and always provocative of laughter—and we burst out again.

Approaching our house I am just opening my mouth to make an admirable grimace at Lyúba, when my eyes fall on a black coffin-lid leaning against one panel of our front door, and my mouth remains in that distorted position.

'*Votre grand'mère est morte!*'<sup>1</sup> says St. Jérôme with a pale face coming out to meet us.

All the time grandmamma's body remains in the house I experience a depressing feeling of fear of death—that is, the dead body reminds me vividly and unpleasantly of the fact that I must die some day—a feeling which for some reason is usually confused with sorrow. I am not sorry about grandmamma and I doubt whether any one sincerely regrets her. Though the house is full of mourning visitors nobody regrets her death except one person, whose vehement grief inexpressibly amazes me. That person is the maid, Gáša. She retires into the garret, locks herself in there, weeps continually, curses herself, tears her hair, won't listen to any advice, and says that death is the only consolation left her after the loss of her beloved mistress.

<sup>1</sup> 'Your grandmother is dead.'

I again repeat that incongruity in feeling is the surest sign of sincerity.

Grandmamma is no more, but memories of her and various discussions about her still live in our house. These discussions relate chiefly to the will she made before her death, the contents of which no one but her executor, Prince Iván Ivánovich, knows. I notice a certain agitation among grandmamma's serfs, often hear conjectures as to which of them will be left to whom, and I confess I involuntarily think with pleasure that we are going to receive an inheritance.

After six weeks Nicholáy, the usual newsmonger in our house, tells me that grandmamma has left all her property to Lyúba, entrusting the guardianship till she marries, not to papa but to Prince Iván Ivánovich.

## XXIV

### I

ONLY a few months remain before I enter the university. I am learning well. I not only await my masters without fear but even feel a certain pleasure during lessons.

It gives me pleasure clearly and distinctly to repeat a lesson I have learnt. I am preparing to enter the faculty of mathematics, and, to tell the truth, the only reason for making that choice is that the words sines, tangents, differentials, integrals, and so on, please me extremely.

I am not nearly so tall as Volódya, am broad-shouldered and fleshy, but as plain as ever, and I suffer from that as before. I try to appear original. One thing consoles me, namely that papa one day said that I had a '*clever phiz*', and I quite believed it.

St. Jérôme is satisfied with me and praises me, and not only do I not hate him, but when he sometimes

says that *with my capacity and my intelligence* it would be a shame not to do this or that, it seems to me that I even like him.

My observation of the maids' room ceased long ago, for I should now be ashamed to hide behind a door, and besides I admit that the certainty that Másha loves Vasíli somewhat cooled me. But what completely cured me of that unfortunate passion was their marriage, for which, at Vasíli's request, I obtained papa's consent.

When the newly-married couple, bringing him sweets on a tray, came to thank papa, and Másha, with blue ribbons in her cap, also thanked us all for something or other, kissing each of us on the shoulder, I was only aware of the rose-scented pomatum on her hair and did not feel the slightest agitation.

In general I begin gradually to be cured of my boyish faults, except, however, the chief one—fated yet to cause me much harm in life—my tendency to philosophize.

## XXV

### VOLÓDYA'S FRIENDS

THOUGH in the company of Volódyá's acquaintances I played an humiliating part which hurt my vanity, I liked to sit in his room when he had visitors and silently to watch all that happened there.

Adjutant Dubkóv and Prince Nekhlyúdov came to see him oftener than any one else. Dubkóv was small, sinewy, and dark, no longer in his first youth and had rather short legs, but he was not bad-looking and was always high-spirited. He was one of those limited men who are particularly attractive just because of their limitations; they cannot see things from different sides, and are always being carried away. Such men's judgments are one-sided and faulty, but

always sincere and attractive. Even their narrow egotism somehow appears excusable and attractive. Besides this, Dubkóv had for Volódya and me a two-fold charm—his military appearance and still more his age, which young people are apt to confuse with *le comme il faut*, which is very highly valued in youth. And in fact, Dubkóv really was what is called *un homme comme il faut*. One thing which pained me was that in his presence Volódya seemed ashamed of me for my most innocent actions, and most of all for my youth.

Nekhlyúdob was not good-looking: his small grey eyes, low straight forehead, and disproportionately long arms and legs, could not be considered handsome. His only handsome features were his unusually tall figure, his delicate complexion, and his beautiful teeth: but his face received so original and energetic a character from his narrow, brilliant eyes and changeable smile—now severe, now child-like and indefinite—that one could not but notice it.

He seemed very bashful, for every trifle made him blush to his ears, but his bashfulness did not resemble mine. The more he blushed the more resolute became the expression of his face, as if he were angry with himself for his own weakness.

Though he seemed very friendly with Dubkóv and Volódya, it was evident that it was only chance that had brought them together. Their inclinations were quite different: Volódya and Dubkóv seemed afraid of anything resembling serious discussion or sentiment; Nekhlyúdob on the contrary was an enthusiast in the highest degree, and in spite of ridicule often plunged into the discussion of philosophic questions and of sentiments. Volódya and Dubkóv liked to talk about the objects of their love (and were in love with several women at a time and both of them with the same woman). Nekhlyúdob, on the contrary, was always seriously angry when they hinted at his love

of some 'red-haired girl'. Volódya and Dubkóv often allowed themselves to make affectionate fun of their relations, but Nekhlyúdob was beside himself if one said anything to the disadvantage of his aunt, for whom he had a kind of ecstatic adoration. Volódya and Dubkóv used to drive somewhere after supper without Nekhlyúdob, whom they called 'a beauteous maiden'.

Prince Nekhlyúdob struck me from the first both by his conversation and by his appearance. But though I saw in his bent of mind much that resembled my own—or perhaps on that very account—the feeling with which he inspired me when I first saw him was far from friendly.

I did not like his quick glance, firm voice, proud look, and above all the complete indifference with which he regarded me. Often during a conversation I felt a strong desire to contradict him; to punish his pride I wished to get the better of him in an argument—to prove to him that I was clever in spite of the fact that he did not wish to pay any attention to me. My shyness however restrained me.

## XXVI

### DISCUSSIONS

VOIÓDYA was lying with his feet on the sofa and, leaning on his arm, was reading a French novel, when after my evening lessons I went as usual to his room. He raised his head to glance at me for an instant, and resumed his reading—a most simple and natural movement, but one which caused me to blush. It seemed to me that his look asked why I had come there, and the quick lowering of his head expressed a wish to conceal from me the meaning of his glance. This readiness to attribute a meaning to the simplest movement was a feature that was characteristic of me at that period. I went to the table and also took

up a book, but before beginning to read, it occurred to me that it was absurd that we, who had not seen each other all day, should say nothing to one another.

'Will you be at home this evening?'

'I don't know. Why?'

'Oh, nothing,' I said, and seeing that the conversation did not catch on, I took the book and began to read.

It is strange that Volódyá and I spent hours in silence when alone together, but that the presence of a third person, even a silent one, was enough to start very interesting and varied conversations between us. We felt that we knew each other too well: too much and too little knowledge of one another are equal obstacles to close communication.

'Is Volódyá at home?' came Dubkóv's voice from the hall.

'Yes,' said Volódyá, putting his feet down and laying his book on the table.

Dubkóv and Nekhlyúdov came in wearing overcoats and hats.

'Well, Volódyá, are we going to the theatre?'

'No, I can't spare the time,' said Volódyá, blushing.

'Oh, come now! Please let's go!'

'But I have no ticket.'

'You can get as many tickets as you like at the door.'

'Wait, I'll be back in a minute,' replied Volódyá evasively, and, jerking his shoulder, he left the room.

I knew that Volódyá was anxious to go to the theatre to which Dubkóv proposed to go and that he was refusing simply because he had no money, and that he had gone to ask the steward to lend him five roubles till he received his next allowance.

'How do you do, *Diplomat*?' said Dubkóv, giving me his hand.

Volódyá's friends called me 'Diplomat' because once after dinner at grandmamma's, she in their presence had got on to the subject of our future, and

had said that Volódya would go into the army, but that she hoped to see me a 'diplomat' in a black dress-coat, with my hair done *à la cog*, which, in her opinion, was an indispensable condition of the diplomatic service.

'Where has Volódya gone?' asked Nekhlyúdob.

'I don't know,' I replied, blushing at the thought that they no doubt had guessed why Volódya had gone out.

'I expect he has no money! Am I right? Oh, Diplomat!' he added, interpreting my smile as an affirmative, 'I also have no money. Have you any, Dubkóv?'

'Let 's see,' said Dubkóv, taking out his purse and very carefully feeling the few small coins in it with his short fingers. 'Here 's five kopeks, here 's twenty, and then—whew-ew-ew!' he said, making a funny gesture with his hand.

At that moment Volódya entered the room.

'Well, are we going?'

'No.'

'How funny you are!' said Nekhlyúdob, 'why don't you say you have no money? Take my ticket if you like!'

'What about you?'

'He will go to his cousins' box,' said Dubkóv.

'No, I shan't go at all.'

'Why?'

'Because, as you know, I don't like going to a box.'

'Why not?'

'I don't like it. I feel uncomfortable.'

'Again the old story! I don't understand why you should be uncomfortable where every one is glad to see you. It 's ridiculous, *mon cher*!'

'What 's to be done, *si je suis timide*?<sup>1</sup> I am sure you never blushed in your life, but I do, every moment, at the merest trifle!' and he blushed as he said it.

<sup>1</sup> if I am timid.

'*Savez-vous d'où vient votre timidité? . . . D'un excès d'amour-propre, mon cher!*'<sup>1</sup> said Dubkóv in a condescending tone.

'What *excès d'amour-propre?*' replied Nekhlyúdob, stung to the quick. 'On the contrary, I am shy because I have not enough *amour-propre*: it always seems to me that people find it unpleasant and dull to be with me . . . that is why . . .'

'Go and dress, Volódyá!' said Dubkóv, taking Volódyá by the shoulders and pulling off his coat. 'Ignat, your master wants to dress!'

'That is why it often happens with me. . . .' Nekhlyúdob continued.

But Dubkóv no longer listened, and began to sing a tune: 'Trala-ta-ra-ra-la-la!'

'You haven't escaped!' said Nekhlyúdob. 'I'll prove to you that shyness does not come from self-esteem. . . .'

'You will, if you come along with us.'

'I have said I won't!'

'Well then stay here and prove it to the Diplomat, and when we return he will tell us all about it.'

'I will prove it,' rejoined Nekhlyúdob with childish obstinacy, 'only come back soon. . . .'

'What do you think? Am I vain?' he said, sitting down beside me.

Though I had made up my mind on this point, I was so abashed by this unexpected inquiry that it was some time before I could reply.

'I think you are,' I said, feeling my voice tremble and my face flush at the thought that the time had come to prove to him that I was *clever*. 'I think that every one is vain and that everything a man does is the result of self-esteem.'

'What then do you mean by self-esteem?' asked

<sup>1</sup> Do you know what your timidity comes from? From an excess of self-esteem, my dear fellow!



Nekhlyúdob, smiling somewhat contemptuously as it seemed to me.

'Self-esteem is the conviction that I am better and wiser than every one else.'

'But how can everybody be convinced of that?'

'Well, I don't know, but whether it is correct or not, no one but me confesses it; I am convinced that I am cleverer than any one else in the world, and am sure that you, too, have a similar conviction. . . .'

'No, I must say that I, for one, have met people I acknowledged to be cleverer than myself,' said Nekhlyúdob.

'Impossible!' said I with conviction.

'Can you really think so?' said Nekhlyúdob, looking at me attentively.

'Quite seriously,' I answered.

And then I was suddenly struck by a thought, which I immediately expressed.

'I will prove it to you. Why do we love ourselves more than others . . .? Because we consider ourselves to be better and more worthy of love. If we thought others better than ourselves we should love them more, but that never happens. And even if it does, I am right all the same!' I added with an involuntary smile of self satisfaction.

Nekhlyúdob was silent for a moment.

'Well, I never thought you were so clever!' he said, with such a good-natured, kindly smile, that it suddenly seemed to me that I was extremely happy.

Praise acts so powerfully not only on a man's feelings but also on his reason, that under its pleasant influence I felt as if I had grown much wiser, and thoughts gathered in my brain with unusual rapidity. From self-esteem we passed on imperceptibly to love, and on that subject conversation seemed inexhaustible. Though our arguments might have appeared quite senseless to an outsider--so vague and one-sided were they--for us they had a high importance. Our souls

were so well attuned that the slightest touch on any chord in one of us evoked response in the other. We felt that there were not words enough or time enough to express to one another all the thoughts that called for utterance.

## XXVII

### THE BEGINNING OF FRIENDSHIP

AFTER that, rather strange but extremely pleasant relations were established between Dmítri Nekhlyúdov and me. Before other people he paid hardly any attention to me; but as soon as we happened to be alone, we settled down in a cosy corner and began discussing things, forgetful of everything and not noticing how time flew.

We discussed future life, art, government service, marriage, and the education of children, and it never entered our heads that all we said was most awful nonsense. This did not occur to us because the nonsense we talked was clever and pleasing nonsense and in youth we still value intellect and believe in it. In youth all the powers of our soul are directed to the future, and that future takes such a variety of vivid and enchanting forms under the influence of hope based not on past experience but on the imagined possibility of happiness, that the mere dreams of future happiness, understood and shared by another, constitute true happiness at that age. In the metaphysical discussions which were among the principal subjects of our conversations, I loved the moment when the thoughts, following one another faster and faster and becoming more and more abstract, at last reached such a degree of vagueness that one saw no possibility of expressing them and, meaning to say what one was thinking, said something quite different. I loved the moment when, rising higher and higher

in the realm of thought, one suddenly became conscious of its illimitability and recognized the impossibility of going farther.

It happened that once during Carnival, Nekhlyúdov was so much occupied with various amusements that though he called several times a day, he did not once converse with me, and this so offended me that he again seemed to me to be proud and unpleasant. I only waited for an opportunity to show him that I did not set any value on his society and had no particular attachment for him.

The first time, that, after Carnival was over, he wanted to have a talk with me, I said I had lessons to prepare and went upstairs; but a quarter of an hour later the class-room door opened and Nekhlyúdov came up to me.

‘Am I disturbing you?’ he asked.

‘No,’ I replied, though I wanted to say that I really had work to do.

‘Then why did you go away from Volódyá’s room? You know it’s long since we had a talk together, and I am so used to it that I feel as if something were lacking.’

My vexation passed in a moment, and Dmítri again became in my eyes the same kind and dear fellow as before.

‘I suppose you know why I went away?’ I said.

‘Perhaps,’ he answered, seating himself beside me, ‘but even if I do guess, I cannot tell you why though you can tell me,’ he added.

‘Yes, and I will: I went away because I was angry with you—no, not angry but vexed. Simply—I am always afraid that you despise me because I am still so young.’

‘Do you know why we have hit it off so well together?’ he said, answering my confession by a kind and wise look, ‘and why I care more for you than for people with whom I am better acquainted and

with whom I have more in common? I have just discovered it. You have a wonderful and rare quality—frankness.’

‘Yes, I always say the very things I am ashamed to confess,’ I assented, ‘but only to those in whom I have confidence.’

‘Yes, but to have full confidence in any one it is necessary to be quite friendly with him, and you and I are not friends yet, Nicholas; do you remember our saying about friendship, that to be true friends each must be sure of the other?’

‘Sure that the things I tell you, you will not tell any one else,’ I said. ‘But you see, our most important and interesting thoughts are just those that nothing would induce us to tell to one another.’

‘And what horrid thoughts!! Such base thoughts that if we knew we should have to confess them they would never dare to enter our heads: . . . Do you know what has occurred to me, Nicholas?’ he added, rising from his chair, smiling and rubbing his hands. ‘*Let us do that*, and you will see how good it will be for both of us; let us promise to confess everything to one another. We shall know one another and not be ashamed; and not to be afraid of other people, let us promise never to tell anything to *any one* about each other! Let us do that!’

‘Let us!’ I said.

And we really did *do that*. What came of it I will relate later.

Karr has said that there are two sides to every attachment: one loves, the other allows himself to be loved: one kisses, the other gives his cheek to be kissed. That is perfectly true; and in our friendship it was I who kissed and Dmítri who presented his cheek; but he too was ready to kiss me. We cared for one another equally because we knew and valued each other: but that did not prevent his exerting an influence on me and my submitting to him.

It goes without saying that under Nekhlyúdov's influence I involuntarily assimilated his tendency, the essence of which was ecstatic adoration of the ideal of virtue, and a conviction that the purpose of man's life is continually to perfect himself. At that time it seemed very possible to improve all men, to destroy all the vices and miseries of mankind, and it seemed very easy and simple to improve oneself, to assimilate all the virtues, and to be happy. . . .

God alone knows whether those noble dreams of youth were really ridiculous and who is to blame that they were not realized. . . .

1854.



# YOUTH





# YOUTH

## I

### WHAT I CONSIDER THE BEGINNING OF ADOLESCENCE

I HAVE said that my friendship with Dmítri opened up to me a new view of life, its aim and its relations. The essence of this view lay in the conviction that the purpose of man's life lies in an aspiration towards moral perfection, and that such perfection is easy, possible, and eternal. But as yet I had found pleasure only in the discovery of new ideas arising from this conviction and in forming brilliant plans for an active and moral future, and my life had gone on in the same trivial, confused, and indolent way.

As yet the virtuous thoughts I and my adored friend Dmítri (whom to myself I sometimes in a whisper called 'wonderful Dmítri') discussed in our conversations, pleased my reason but not my feelings. But a time came when these ideas entered my mind with so fresh a force of moral discovery that I became frightened at the thought of all the time I had wasted, and wished at once, that very moment, to apply these ideas to life, with a firm intention never to be false to them.

This is the period from which I date my youth.

I was at that time nearly sixteen. Teachers still came to me, St. Jérôme supervised my studies, and compulsorily and reluctantly I prepared myself for the university. Apart from studies, my occupations consisted in solitary, disconnected fancies and reflections; in gymnastic exercises—with a view to becoming the strongest man in the world; in sometimes loitering without any definite purpose through all the rooms, especially in the passage outside the maids'

room, and in looking at myself in the mirror, which however I always left with a sad feeling of depression and even disgust. Not only was I convinced that my appearance was plain, but I could not even comfort myself with the usual consolation in such cases . . . I could not say that I had an expressive, a clever, or noble face. . . . There was nothing expressive in it—only the commonest, coarse, and ugly features; my small grey eyes were, especially when I looked in the glass, stupid rather than clever. Of manliness there was still less; though I was not short and was very strong for my years, all the features of my face were soft, flabby, and ill-defined. There was not even anything noble in them; on the contrary, my face was like that of a simple peasant, and I had just such big hands and feet—and at that time this seemed to me very shameful.

## II

## SPRING

THE year I entered the university, Easter came rather late in April, so the examinations were fixed for the week after Easter, and in Passion week I had both to prepare myself for the Sacrament and to make final preparations for my examination.

The weather, after a fall of sleet—which Karl Iványch used to call ‘the son coming after his father’—had been calm warm and bright for three days. There was not a speck of snow left in the streets, the dirty sludge on the roads had given place to a wet glistening surface and to swift-running rivulets. In the sun the last drops were falling from the roofs, the buds were swelling on the trees in the garden, in the yard there was a dry path to the stables past a frozen heap of manure, and beside the porch green mossy grass appeared between the stones. It was that peculiar period of spring which most affects the human

soul—everything glittering in the bright, not yet hot, sunshine; rivulets and wet places where the snow had thawed; a scented freshness in the air, and a delicately blue sky with long transparent clouds. I do not know why, but it seems to me as if the effect of this first period of new-born spring is more perceptible and stronger on the soul in a big city—one sees less but feels more. I stood at the window, into which the morning sun threw dusty rays through the double panes on to the floor of the class-room, of which I was unendurably weary, and where I was trying to solve a long algebraical equation on the blackboard. In one hand I held a limp, tattered copy of Franker's *Algebra*, in the other a small piece of chalk, with which I had already soiled both hands, my face, and the elbows of my jacket. Nicholáy,<sup>1</sup> with his apron on and his sleeves rolled up, was breaking off the putty with a pair of pincers and bending back the nails holding the frame of the window that looked out on to the garden. His occupation and the noise he made distracted my attention. I was moreover in a very bad, dissatisfied mood. Nothing seemed to succeed: I had made a mistake at the beginning of my calculation, so that it had to be done all over again; I had twice dropped the chalk; I felt that my face and hands were smeared, the sponge had vanished somewhere, and Nicholáy's knocking affected my nerves painfully. I wanted to get into a temper and to grumble. I threw down the chalk and the *Algebra*, and began pacing up and down the room. Then I remembered that we had to go to confession that day and must avoid everything evil; and suddenly a peculiarly mild mood came over me and I went up to Nicholáy.

'Let me help you, Nicholáy,' I said, trying to speak in the mildest tone possible. The thought that I was

<sup>1</sup> Nicholáy was removing the inner frame of the window; all the windows having double frames, in winter, to keep out the cold.

acting well by repressing my vexation and helping him, increased that meek frame of mind still more.

The putty was knocked away and the nails bent back, but though Nicholáy tugged at the frame with all his might it would not yield.

'If the frame comes out at once when I pull with him,' I thought, 'that will mean that it would be a sin to learn any more to-day.' The frame moved forward on one side and came out.

'Where shall I take it to?' I asked.

'Allow me, I can manage it myself,' replied Nicholáy, evidently surprised and seemingly not pleased by my zeal. 'They must not be mixed up, and I have them all numbered in the box-room.'

'I will mark this one,' I said, lifting the frame.

I think that if the box-room had been two miles away and the frame twice as heavy I should have been very well satisfied. I wanted to exhaust myself helping Nicholáy. When I returned to the room the little bricks and salt pyramids<sup>1</sup> had already been moved on to the window-sill and Nicholáy was sweeping the sand and the sleepy flies out of the open window with a goose-wing. The fresh fragrant air had already penetrated into the room and filled it. From the window one could hear the din of the city, and the sparrows chirping in the garden.

Everything was brilliantly illumined, the room had grown gayer, a light, spring breeze moved the leaves of my *Algebra* and the hair on Nicholáy's head. I went to the window, sat down on the sill, leaned over into the garden, and mused.

An extremely powerful and pleasant feeling, quite new to me, suddenly penetrated my soul. The wet earth through which here and there bright-green blades of grass with yellow stems were pushing up;

<sup>1</sup> Salt, sand, and other substances are placed between the inner and the outer window-frames to absorb any moisture there may be.

the rills glistening in the sunlight and bearing whirling bits of earth and chips of wood; the reddening twigs of lilac with their swelling buds swaying just under the window; the busy twitter of birds bustling about in that bush; the dark fence wet with melting snow; and above all, that moist aromatic air and joyous sunshine, spoke distinctly and clearly to me of something new and beautiful, which though I cannot render as it revealed itself to me, I will try to tell of as I conceived it. Everything spoke to me of beauty, happiness, and virtue; told me that each of these was quite easy and attainable for me, that the one could not be without the others, and even that beauty, happiness, and virtue were one and the same thing. 'How could I have failed to understand this? How bad I have been till now! How good and happy I might have been, and how good and happy I can be in future!' I said to myself. 'I must quickly, quickly, this very moment, become a different being and begin to live differently.' Regardless of this however I continued to sit on the window-sill for a long time dreaming and doing nothing. Has it ever happened to you to lie down and fall asleep on a dull rainy day in summer, and waking up at sunset to open your eyes and see in the broadening square of the window, from under the linen blind which bulges out and beats with its rod against the window-sill, the shady, purple side of a lime avenue wet with rain, and a moist garden path lit by the brilliant slanting rays of the sun, and suddenly to hear the merry life of the birds in the garden and see the insects which, translucent in the sunshine, whirl about in the open window; to smell the fragrance of the air after the rain, and to think, 'How is it I was not ashamed to waste such an evening in sleep?' and hurriedly to jump up to go into the garden and rejoice in life? If it has happened to you, it may serve as an example of the powerful feelings I experienced at this time.

## III

## FANCIES

'To-day I shall confess and be cleansed of all my sins,' I thought, 'and shall never again. . . .' (Here I recalled all the sins that most tormented me.) 'I shall certainly go to church every Sunday, and afterwards read the Gospels for a whole hour; then from the twenty-five ruble note I am to have every month after entering the university, I shall certainly give two-and-a-half rubles (a tithe) to the poor and so that no one will know of it—and not to beggars, but among the poor I will find an orphan or an old woman about whom nobody knows.

'I shall have my own room (probably St. Jérôme's) and I will attend to it myself and keep it wonderfully clean; and I won't make the man do anything for me: isn't he just such a being as myself? Then I will go to the university every day on foot (and if they give me a vehicle I will sell it and put that money also aside for the poor) and I will carry out everything exactly (what that 'everything' was I could certainly not have told at the time, but I vividly understood and felt this 'everything' to be a wise, moral, and irreproachable life). I will take down the lectures, and even prepare the different subjects in advance, so that I shall be first in the first course, and will write a thesis. For the second course I shall know everything in advance and may pass straight into the third course, so that at eighteen I shall graduate as first Candidate with two gold medals; then I shall take my Master's, and my Doctor's degree, and become the first scholar in Russia. . . . I may even be the most learned man in Europe. . . . Well, and then . . . ?' I asked myself. But here I remembered that these fancies indicated pride—a sin I should have to confess to the priest that very evening, and I turned back to the beginning of

my reflections. 'To prepare for the lectures I will go to the Sparrow Hills on foot; there I will choose a spot under a tree and will read them over. Sometimes I will take something with me to eat: cheese, or pies from Pedotti's, or something else. I will have a rest, and then read some good book, or sketch landscapes, or play some instrument (I will certainly learn to play the flute). Then *she*, too, will go for walks on the Sparrow Hills, and some day she will come up and ask me who I am. I will look at her sadly, like this, and say that I am a priest's son and am happy only here, when I am alone, all, all alone. She will give me her hand, say something, and sit down beside me. So we will go there every day, will be friends, and I shall kiss her. . . . No, that's not right. On the contrary, from to-day I will not even look at a woman. I will never, never, go to the maids' room, and will try not even to pass that way, but in three years' time I shall be of age and shall certainly marry. I will purposely take as much exercise as possible and practise gymnastics every day, so that by the time I am twenty-five I shall be stronger than Rappeau. The first day I will hold out half a pud<sup>1</sup> weight at arm's length, the next day a twenty-one pound weight, the third day twenty-two pounds, and so on, so that I shall at last be able to hold four puds in each hand, and be stronger than any of the serfs; and if any one thinks of insulting me, or speaks disrespectfully of *her*, I will take him by the front of his coat, lift him about five feet off the ground with one hand, and just hold him up to let him feel my strength, and then leave him; that however is not right either--no it won't matter; after all, I shan't harm him, but only show him that I . . .'

Let me not be reproached if the dreams of my adolescence were as puerile as those of my childhood and boyhood. I am convinced that were I destined to live

<sup>1</sup> Half a pud is twenty Russian pounds (eighteen English pounds).

to advanced old age and my story were to keep pace with my age, I should as an old man of seventy still have just such impossible, childish dreams as now. I should dream of some charming Márya who would fall in love with me, a toothless old man, as she fell in love with Mazeppa, and of how my feeble-minded son, by some extraordinary chance, would become a Minister, or of how I should suddenly become possessed of many millions of money. I am convinced that there is no human being and no age devoid of this benign, consoling capacity to dream. But except for a general characteristic of impossibility and fairy-likeness, the dreams of each man and each period of life have their own distinctive characteristics. At that period, which I regard as the end of boyhood and beginning of youth, my dreams were based on four feelings: love of *her*, the imaginary woman of whom I always dreamt in one and the same way and whom I expected at any moment to meet somewhere. *She* was a little of Sónya, a little of Másha, Vasíli's wife, when washing linen in the wash-tub, and a little of a woman with pearls round her white neck whom I had seen long ago at the theatre in the box next to ours. The second feeling was the love of being loved. I wanted everybody to know me and love me, I wanted to tell my name—Nicholas Irtényev—and for everybody to be struck by this information, to surround me, and thank me for something. The third feeling was hope of some unusual, vain-glorious good fortune, and was so strong and firm that it verged on insanity. I was so convinced that I should very soon by some extraordinary occurrence suddenly become the richest and most distinguished person in the world, that I was continually in a perturbed state of expectation of some magic happiness. I kept expecting that it would now begin and I should attain all that man can desire, and I was always in a hurry, imagining that it was already *beginning* somewhere where I was



not. The fourth and chief feeling was self-disgust and repentance, but repentance so mingled with hope of happiness that it had nothing sad about it. It seemed to me so easy and natural to tear oneself away from all the past, to alter and forget all that had been, and to begin one's life with all its relations completely anew, in such a way that the past would not oppress or bind me. I even revelled in my repulsion for the past, and tried to see it blacker than it really was. The blacker the circle of my recollections of the past, the clearer and brighter stood out the clear, bright point of the present, and the fairer streamed the rainbow colours of the future. That voice of repentance and passionate desire for perfection was the main new sensation of my soul at this period of my development, and it was this that laid a new foundation for my views of myself, of mankind, and of God's universe.

Oh, beneficent and comforting voice that hast so often since then—in sad times when my soul has silently submitted to the powers of worldly deceit and debauch—suddenly and boldly risen up against all falsehood, virulently denounced the past, showing me and making me love the bright point of the present, and promising welfare and happiness in the future—beneficent, comforting voice!—can it be that you will ever cease to make yourself heard?

#### IV

#### OUR FAMILY CIRCLE

PAPA was seldom at home that spring, but when this did happen he was always exceedingly jolly; he strummed his favourite airs on the piano, cast affectionate glances at us, invented jokes about Mimi and all of us, such as that the Georgian Tsarevich had seen Mimi out driving and had fallen so much in love

with her that he had petitioned the Synod for a divorce; or that I had been appointed secretary to the Ambassador in Vienna—and he announced these items of news to us with a serious face—he teased Kátya with spiders, of which she was afraid; he was very amiable to our friends Dubkóv and Nekhlyúdob, and again and again recounted to us and to our visitors his plans for the next year. Though these plans changed almost every day and contradicted one another, they were so alluring that we hung on his lips, and Lyúba gazed fixedly straight at his mouth for fear of losing a single word. Now the plan would be for us to remain in Moscow and study at the university while he and Lyúba would go for two years to Italy; then it would be to buy an estate on the south coast of the Crimea and go there every summer; or to move to Petersburg with the whole family, and so on. But besides his unusual liveliness another change had latterly taken place in papa which much astonished me. He had fashionable clothes made for himself—an olive-green dress-coat, fashionable trousers with straps, and a long overcoat which became him very well; and he often smelt of delicious perfume when he went visiting, especially when he visited a certain lady of whom Mimi never spoke without a sigh and a face which plainly said: ‘Poor orphans! Unfortunate passion! It is well that *she* is no more!’ and so on. I learnt from Nicholáy, for Papa never spoke to us of his gambling, that he had been particularly lucky that winter, had won tremendously, had deposited the money in the bank, and in spring meant not to play any more. Probably it was for fear of not being able to keep this resolve that he wished to go to the country as soon as possible. He even decided, without waiting till I had entered the university, to leave immediately after Easter with the girls for Petróvskoe, where Volódya and I were to join him later.

All that winter, and right into the spring, Volódya

and Dubkóv were inseparable—they had begun to cool towards Dmítri. Their chief pleasures as far as I could gather from conversations I overheard, consisted in continually drinking champagne, driving in a sledge past the windows of a young lady with whom they seemed both to be in love, and dancing vis-à-vis, no longer at children's but at real balls. This latter circumstance, though we were fond of one another, separated Volódya and me very much. We felt that there was too great a difference between a boy to whom masters still came and a man who danced at grown-up balls, for us to tell one another our thoughts. Kátya was already quite grown up and read a lot of novels, and the thought that she might marry soon no longer seemed a joke to me; but though Volódya, too, was grown up they did not come together and even seemed to despise one another. In general, when Kátya was alone at home nothing amused her but novels and she was generally dull; but when we had men visitors she became very lively and amiable and used her eyes in such a way that I could not at all understand what she wished to express. Only later, when during a conversation I heard her remark that the only coquetry permissible to a maiden was that of the eye, could I explain to myself those strange unnatural grimaces with her eyes, which other people did not seem to be at all surprised at. Lyúba too was beginning to wear much longer dresses so that her crooked legs were hardly visible, but she was still the same cry-baby as before. Now she no longer dreamt of marrying an hussar, but a singer or musician, and for this purpose applied herself zealously to music. St. Jérôme, knowing that he would remain with us only till I had finished my examinations, had found himself a place in a Count's family, and seemed after that to look on those of our household with a sort of contempt. He was seldom at home, began to smoke cigarettes—which was then the height of dandyism—

and continually whistled merry tunes through a card. Mimi grew more and more embittered day by day, and ever since we had begun to be grown up seemed to expect nothing good from any one or anything.

When I came to dinner I found only Mimi, Kátya, Lyúba, and St. Jérôme, in the dining-room. Papa was not at home and Volódya was preparing for an examination with his comrades in his own room, and had ordered dinner to be sent there. Of late the head of the table was generally taken by Mimi, whom none of us respected, and dinner had lost much of its charm. It was not what it had been in mamma's and grand-mamma's lifetime—a sort of ceremony which at a certain hour united the whole family and divided the day into halves. We now allowed ourselves to come late, to come in when the second course was served, to drink wine out of tumblers (St. Jérôme himself setting us that example), to loll in our chairs, to get up before dinner was over, and to take other similar liberties. Dinner had ceased to be the daily, joyous, family rite it used to be. How different it had been at Petróvskoe when we all assembled washed and dressed for dinner at two o'clock, and sat in the drawing-room talking merrily and waiting for the appointed hour. Exactly at the moment when the clock in the butler's pantry began to whirr preparatory to striking two, Fóka, table-napkin on arm and stepping softly, came in with a dignified and rather austere face, and announced in loud, long-drawn accents: 'Dinner is served!' and we all, with bright contented faces, the older ones in front and the younger ones behind, went into the dining-room, starched petticoats rustling, boots and shoes slightly creaking, and, talking quietly, took our appointed places. Or in Moscow how different it was when we used to stand before the table, laid in the dining-room, talking in low tones and awaiting grand-mamma, to whom Gabriel had already gone to announce that dinner was served! Suddenly the door

would open, we would hear the rustle of her dress and the shuffling of her feet, and grandmamma with some peculiar lilac bow on her cap, smiling or looking gloomily askance (according to her state of health), would sail in sideways from her own room. Gabriel would rush to her arm-chair, you would hear a sound of moving chairs, and with a kind of shiver down your back—prelude to a good appetite—you would take up your rather damp starched table-napkin, eat a bit of bread, and rubbing your hands under the table with impatient avidity, watch the plates of steaming soup which the butler served round in due rotation according to rank, age, and grandmamma's favour.

I now no longer felt either joy or excitement when I came in to dinner.

Mimi's, St. Jérôme's, and the girls' chatter about the dreadful boots the Russian master wore, about what flounced dresses the Princesses Kornakóva had, and so on—that chatter which formerly evoked in me a frank contempt that, especially with regard to Lyúba and Kátya, I had not attempted to conceal, did not disturb my new and virtuous frame of mind. I was extraordinarily meek, smilingly listened to them with particular kindness, politely asked them to pass me the kvas, and agreed with St. Jérôme when he corrected a phrase of mine at dinner, remarking that it was more elegant to say *je puis* than *je peux*. I must own however that I was rather disappointed that nobody took any particular notice of my meekness and virtue. After dinner Lyúba showed me a piece of paper on which she had written down all her sins. I found this quite good, but that it was still better to note all your sins down in your soul, and that 'all this was not the right thing . . .'

'Why not the right thing?' asked Lyúba.

'Oh, well, this is good, too; you would not understand me . . .'

and I went upstairs, telling St. Jérôme that I was going to study, but really in order before

confession—still an hour and a half off—to draw up a list of my duties and occupations, to set down on paper the purpose of my life, and the rules by which I should now always unfailingly act.

## V

## RULES

I TOOK a sheet of paper and at first wanted to start on the list of duties and occupations for the coming year. I had to rule the sheet, but as I could not find the ruler, I used the Latin dictionary for the purpose. By drawing my pen along the side of the dictionary, which I then moved away, it turned out that I had made an inky smear instead of a line, and besides this the dictionary was not large enough to cover the whole length of the paper and on reaching its soft corner the line went crooked. I took another sheet of paper and by moving the dictionary along managed to rule the paper in a sort of way. Having divided my duties into three kinds—duties to myself, to my neighbours, and to God—I began to set down the first; but I found so many of them and so many kinds and subdivisions, that it was necessary first to write down the 'Rules of life', and then set to work on the list. I took six sheets of paper, sewed them together, and wrote on the cover, 'Rules of Life'. These words were so crookedly and unevenly written that I long considered whether I should not rewrite them, and for some considerable time tormented myself looking at the list I had torn up and at that ill-written heading. 'Why is it all so beautiful and clear in my soul and comes out so mis-shapen on paper and in life in general, when I wish to practice anything I have planned . . . ?'

'The Father-confessor has arrived, please come down to hear the precepts read,' Nicholáy came and announced.

I hid my papers in the table drawer, looked in the glass, brushed my hair upwards, which I was convinced gave me a pensive air, and went down into the sitting-room, where a table was placed ready covered with a cloth, and with an icon and burning wax-tapers upon it. Papa entered at the same time by another door. The confessor, a grey-haired monk with a stern, aged face, gave papa his blessing. Papa kissed his small, broad, dry hand, and I did the same.

'Call Vóldemar!' said papa. 'Where is he? No, don't; he will of course do his devotions at the university.'

'He is busy with the prince,' said Kátya, and glanced at Lyúba. Lyúba suddenly blushed about something, puckered up her face pretending to be in pain, and left the room. I followed her. She had stopped in the drawing-room and was again writing something with pencil on her paper.

'What! Have you committed another sin?' I asked.

'No, it's nothing, only . . .' she replied, and blushed.

At that moment Dmítri's voice was heard in the hall bidding good-bye to Volódya.

'There now you get temptations everywhere,' said Kátya, coming into the room and addressing Lyúba.

I could not make out what was happening to my sister: she was so confused that tears rose to her eyes, and her confusion, reaching its utmost limits, turned into vexation with herself and with Kátya who was evidently teasing her.

'There, one can see at once you are a *foreigner*.' (Nothing offended Kátya more than to be called a *foreigner*—that was why Lyúba had used the word). 'Before such a sacrament!' she continued in a solemn tone—'and you upset me on purpose . . . you ought to understand . . . it is not a trifling matter.'

'Do you know, Nicholas, what she has put down?' said Kátya, greatly offended at being called a *foreigner*. 'She has written . . .'

'I did not expect you to be so spiteful,' said Lyúba, now quite tearful, as she went away. 'At such a moment and on purpose, always to lead one into sin. I don't bother you about your feelings and sufferings!'

## VI

## CONFESSION

WITH these and similar distracted reflections in my mind I returned to the sitting-room when all had assembled there, and the confessor, having risen, prepared to read the prayer before confession. But as soon as the expressive and severe voice of the monk, saying the prayer, resounded amid the general silence, and especially when he uttered the words: 'Confess all your sins without shame, concealment, or justification, and your soul shall be cleansed before God, but if ye conceal aught it will be accounted a great sin unto you,' the feeling of devout trepidation which I had experienced that morning at the thought of the impending sacrament again returned to me. I even found pleasure in the consciousness of that state and tried to retain it, repressing all the thoughts that came into my mind and making efforts to feel afraid of something.

Papa was first to go to confess. He remained very long in grandmamma's room, and all that time we in the sitting-room were silent, or spoke in whispers as to who should go next. At last through the door we heard the monk's voice again reading a prayer, and papa's footsteps. The door creaked and papa came out, slightly coughing as was his habit, jerking his shoulder, and not looking at any of us.

'Now you go in, Lyúba, and mind you tell everything. You know you are a great sinner of mine!' said papa cheerfully, pinching her cheek.

Lyúba turned pale, then blushed, took her notes



out of her apron pocket, put them back again, and bending her head and seeming to shorten her neck, as if expecting a blow from above, passed through the door. She did not stay there long, but when she returned her shoulders were heaving with sobs.

At last, after pretty little Kátya who came back smiling, my turn arrived. I entered the dimly lighted room with the same dull fear, and a desire intentionally to stimulate that fear more and more. The confessor stood at the reading-desk and slowly turned his face towards me.

I did not stay more than five minutes in grand-mamma's room, but came out of it happy and, as I was then convinced, a completely pure, morally regenerated and new man. Though the old surroundings all struck me unpleasantly—the same rooms, the same furniture, and my own unaltered figure (I should have liked all external things to have changed as it seemed to me I had changed inwardly)—in spite of all this, I remained in that blissful state of mind till I went to bed.

I was already falling asleep, going over in my imagination all the sins from which I had been cleansed, when I suddenly remembered a shameful sin I had concealed when confessing. The words of the prayer before confession recurred to my mind and kept ringing in my ears. All my tranquillity instantly vanished . . . 'But if ye conceal aught it will be accounted a great sin . . .' I seemed to hear unceasingly, and I saw myself as such a dreadful sinner that no punishment was adequate for me. For a long time I tossed from side to side thinking about my condition, every moment awaiting punishment from God, and even sudden death—a thought that filled me with indescribable terror. But suddenly I had a happy thought: at daybreak I would walk or drive to the Monastery to see the priest and would confess over again, and I calmed down.

## VII

## VISIT TO THE MONASTERY

I WOKE several times during the night, afraid of oversleeping myself, and was up before six. Only a little light showed through the window. I put on my clothes and boots, that lay crumpled and unbrushed beside my bed as Nicholáy had not yet come for them, and, without saying my prayers or washing, I went out into the street alone for the first time in my life.<sup>1</sup>

On the opposite side, beyond the green roof of a high house, the rosy gleam of dawn gleamed through the cold mist. A fairly sharp spring morning frost had hardened the mud and fettered the streams of water; it made my feet tingle and pinched my face and hands. There was not a single cabman as yet in our street, though I had counted on finding one to take me to the Monastery and back quickly. Only some loaded carts were moving down the Arbát street, and two bricklayers passed along the pavement chatting. After I had gone about a thousand paces I began to meet people—women on their way to market with their baskets, water-carts going to fetch water in their barrels, and a pieman who appeared at the cross-roads; a bakery shop was opening, and at the Arbát gates I came across an old cabman dozing and swaying as he jolted along on his shabby, patched, light-blue *caliberny drózhki*.<sup>2</sup> Still probably half asleep, he asked only twenty kopeks to drive to the Monastery and back, then he came to his senses suddenly and, just as I was going to take my seat, began whipping his horse with the ends of the reins and very nearly drove away. 'Must feed my horse! I can't, sir,' he muttered.

<sup>1</sup> Lads of good family were kept under strict supervision till they were grown up.

<sup>2</sup> A primitive vehicle with a very narrow seat.

With difficulty I persuaded him to stop, and offered him forty kopeks. He stopped, looked at me attentively, and said: 'Get in, sir.' I own I was rather afraid he might take me into some out-of-the-way lane and rob me. Catching hold of the collar of his tattered coat, and so pitiably exposing the wrinkled neck above his very bent back, I mounted the lumpy, rickety, light-blue seat, and we went rattling up the Vozdvizhenka street. On the way I noticed that the back of the vehicle was covered with a bit of the same greenish cloth of which the cabman's coat was made, and this circumstance somehow quieted me, and I no longer feared that he would drive me into an out-of-the-way street and rob me.

The sun had already risen pretty high and was brightly gilding the domes of the churches when we reached the Monastery. In the shade the ground was still frozen, but rapid and turbid streams flowed all over the road and the horse splashed through the thawing mud. When I had entered the Monastery enclosure I asked the first person I met for the Father-Confessor.

'That is his cell,' said the monk who was passing by, pointing to a small house with a porch.

'Thank you very much,' I said.

But what could the monks, who looked at me as one by one they came out of church, think of me? I was not grown up, nor a child; my face was not washed, my hair not combed, fluff was sticking to my clothes, my boots were muddy and not blacked. To what class of people would the observant monks mentally assign me? And they were looking at me attentively. However, I went on in the direction the young monk had indicated.

An old man in black garments and with thick grey eyebrows met me on the narrow path leading to the cells and asked me what I wanted.

For a moment I wished to say, 'Nothing,' run back

to the cab, and drive home; but despite his overhanging eyebrows the old man's face inspired confidence. I said I wanted to see the Confessor, and gave his name.

'Come, young gentleman, I will show you the way,' said he turning back, and apparently at once guessing my situation. 'The Father is at matins; he will come soon.'

He opened the door and led me through a neat passage and anteroom over a clean linen floor-cloth into the cell.

'You can wait here,' he said to me with a kindly comforting look, and went away.

The room in which I found myself was very small and most neatly arranged. Its whole furniture consisted of a small table covered with oilcloth, which stood between two casement windows with two geraniums in pots on the window-sills, a stand with icons and a lamp hanging before them, one arm-chair and two others. In the corner hung a clock with a floral design on its face and two brass weights hanging from its chains; on the partition, which was connected with the ceiling by small whitewashed wooden crosspieces, and behind which no doubt was a bed, two cassocks hung on a nail.

The windows faced a white wall some five feet from them. Between it and them grew a small lilac bush. Not a sound from outside reached the room, so that the pleasant rhythmic tick of the pendulum sounded loud in that stillness.

As soon as I was alone in that quiet little nook, all my former thoughts and recollections left my head as if they had never been there and I fell into a kind of inexpressibly pleasant musing. That faded nankeen cassock with its threadbare lining, the worn black leather bindings and brass clasps of the books, those dull green plants with their washed leaves, the carefully watered earth, and especially the mono-

tonous recurring sound of the pendulum, spoke to me clearly of some new hitherto unknown life, a life of solitude, prayer, and quiet peaceful happiness. . . .

'Months pass, years pass,' I thought, 'and he is always alone, always calm, and always feels his conscience clean before God and that his prayers are heard by Him.' I sat for about half an hour on a chair trying not to move and not to breathe audibly, lest I should disturb the harmony of the sounds that told me so much. And the pendulum continued ticking, more loudly to the right, less loudly to the left.

## CHAPTER VIII

### MY SECOND CONFESSION

THE steps of the Confessor roused me from my musings.

'Good morning,' he said, smoothing his grey hair with his hand. 'What is it you want?'

I asked him to bless me, and kissed his small yellowish hand with peculiar pleasure.

When I explained my request to him, he said nothing, but went up to the icons and began the confession.

When the confession was over and, mastering my shame, I had told him all that was on my mind, he placed his hands on my head and said in his soft resounding voice: 'The blessing of the Heavenly Father be upon thee, my son, and may He ever preserve thee in faith, meekness, and humility. Amen.'

I was completely happy; tears of joy choked me. I kissed a fold of his cloth cassock and raised my head. The monk's countenance was quite calm.

I felt that I was enjoying my emotion, and fearing to disturb it in any way I hurriedly took leave of the Confessor, and without looking to either side for fear of letting it evaporate, I passed through the enclosure and again mounted the jolting, motley, swaying

vehicle. But its jolting, and the variety of objects that flitted before my eyes, soon dispersed that feeling, and I was already thinking that the Confessor was probably now saying to himself that he had never in his whole life met, nor would meet, a young man with so beautiful a soul as mine, and even that there were none such. I felt convinced of this, and it gave me a sense of joy of the kind one must communicate to somebody.

I had a terrible desire to talk to some one, and as I had no one at hand except the cabman, I addressed myself to him.

‘Was I gone long?’ I asked.

‘A good long while, and my horse should have had a feed long ago; you see I am a night-cabman,’ answered the old man, who seemed more cheerful than he had been, now that the sun was up.

‘But to me it seemed only a minute,’ I said. ‘Do you know why I went to the Monastery?’ I added, moving into the hollow nearer to the old man.

‘What’s our business? To drive our fare where he tells us to go,’ he answered.

‘But all the same, what do you think?’ I continued.

‘I dare say you have to bury some one and went to buy a plot for the grave,’ he answered.

‘No, friend; but do you know why I went?’

‘Can’t say, sir,’ he replied.

The cabman’s voice seemed to me so kindly that, as an example to him, I decided to tell him the object of my visit and even the feeling I had experienced.

‘Shall I tell you? Well, you see . . .’

I told him everything and described all my beautiful feelings to him. I blush even now at the recollection.

‘Indeed, sir?’ he said sceptically.

For a long time after that, he remained silent and sat immovable, except that he occasionally tucked in the skirt of his coat, which kept slipping from under his striped trousers as his leg, in his enormous boot,

jolted on the step of the vehicle. I was beginning to imagine that he thought the same about me as the Confessor—namely, that there was not another such splendid young man as I in the whole world; but he suddenly turned towards me.

‘I say, sir, you belong to the gentry?’

‘What?’ I asked.

‘To the gentry, the gentry?’ he repeated, mumbling with his toothless mouth.

‘No,’ I thought, ‘he has not understood me,’ and I said nothing more to him till I got home.

Not the emotional and devout feeling itself, but my satisfaction at having experienced it, remained with me all the way, despite the people dotting the streets in the brilliant sunlight—but as soon as I got home that feeling vanished completely. I had not got the forty kopeks for the cabman, and Gabriel, the butler, to whom I was already in debt, would not lend me anything more. The cabman, having seen me run twice across the yard to find some money, and probably guessing what I was about, got down from his seat and, though he had seemed so kind, began saying in a loud voice—with evident intent to sting me—that there were swindlers around who did not pay their fares.

Everybody at home was still asleep, so that except the servants, there was no one from whom I could borrow the forty kopeks. At last Vasili, on my giving him my most solemn word of honour to repay him—which, as I saw by his face, he did not at all believe in—because he liked me and remembered the service I had done him, paid the cabman for me. So the feeling I had had dispersed like smoke. When I began to dress for church to go with all the others to receive communion, and it turned out that my suit had not been mended and I could not wear it, I committed many sins. Having put on another suit, I went to communion in a strange condition of mental flurry and entire distrust of my fine inclinations.

## IX

## HOW I PREPARED FOR THE EXAMINATIONS

ON Thursday in Easter week, Papa, my sister, and Mimi with Kátya, went to the country, so that only Volódya, St. Jérôme, and I remained in grand-mamma's large house. The mood I had been in on the day of my confession and of my visit to the Monastery had quite passed away and had left nothing but a dim though pleasant memory, which was gradually being deadened by the new impressions of my freedom.

The note-book entitled 'Rules of Life' was hidden away with my draft exercise-books. Although the idea that it was possible to draw up a list of rules for all the circumstances of life and always be guided by them pleased me and seemed very simple and yet important—and though I still intended to apply this to life—I seemed to have again forgotten that it ought to be done at once, and kept putting it off to some other time. I was, however, comforted to find that every idea that entered my mind fitted exactly into one or other subdivision of my rules and duties: either the rules in regard to my neighbour, or to myself, or to God. 'I shall then put this down there, and many many other thoughts which will occur to me later on that subject,' I said to myself. I now often ask myself: Was I better and more in the right then when I believed in the omnipotence of man's reason, or now, when having lost capacity to develop, I doubt the power and importance of man's reason?—and I cannot give myself a positive answer.

The consciousness of freedom, and that springtime feeling of expecting something, of which I have already spoken, had brought me to such a state of agitation that I was quite unable to master myself, and prepared for my examinations very badly. I would sit of a morning in the class-room well aware that



I had to work because next day would be the examination in a subject of which I had still two whole questions to read up, when suddenly some spring odour would come in through the window, and it would seem as if it were urgently necessary for me immediately to recall something. My hands would automatically drop the book, my feet would automatically begin to move and pace backwards and forwards, and—as if some one had pressed a spring and set a machine in motion—all sorts of merry motley dreams would rush so lightly, naturally, and rapidly through my head that I had only time to notice their glitter. And one hour and another would pass unnoticed. Or I would sit with a book and somehow manage to concentrate all my attention on it, when suddenly I would hear a woman's step and the rustle of her dress in the passage outside—and everything would leap out of my head and it would be impossible to sit still, though I knew very well that no one but Gáša, grand-mamma's old lady's maid, could be going along the passage. 'But suppose it is *she*?' would enter my head—'suppose it is now going to begin, and I should miss it?', and I would rush out into the passage and see that it really was Gáša; but for a long time after that I could not control my mind. The spring had been pressed and again a terrible jumble would fill my head. Or I would be sitting alone in my room in the evening by the light of a tallow-candle, and to snuff the candle or settle myself more comfortably I would suddenly tear my mind for a moment from my book, and I would see that it was dark in all the doorways and corners and hear that the whole house was quiet, and again it would be impossible not to listen to that silence and not to look at that darkness through the door that opened into a dark room, and not to remain motionless for a long long time, or go downstairs and walk through all the empty rooms. Often too I would in the evening sit unobserved in the

hall, listening to the tune of 'The Nightingale', which Gáša, sitting alone in the ballroom, played on the piano with two fingers, by the light of a tallow-candle. And when it was moonlight I could positively not help getting out of bed and lying down on the sill of the window that opened into the little garden, gazing at the moonlit roof of the Sháposhnikov's house, at the stately belfry of our parish church, and at the evening shadows of the fence, and a bush which lay across the garden path; and I could not help remaining there so long that I could hardly wake up by ten o'clock next morning.

So that if it had not been for the masters who still visited me, and for St. Jérôme who now and then, involuntarily, excited my ambition, and especially for the wish to appear an intelligent youth in the eyes of my friend Nekhlyúdov, that is, to pass my examinations excellently—which in his opinion was a very important matter—if it had not been for these things, the spring and freedom would have made me forget everything I knew before, and I should never have passed my examinations.

## X

### THE EXAMINATION IN HISTORY

ON the 16th of April, under the guidance of St. Jérôme, I entered the large university hall for the first time. We had come in our rather smart phaeton. For the first time in my life I wore a dress-coat, and all my clothes, even my linen and my stockings, were quite new and of the best. When the doorkeeper downstairs helped me off with my overcoat and I stood before him in all the beauty of my attire, I even felt a little ashamed to be so dazzling. But when I entered the bright parquet-floored hall, full of people, and saw hundreds of young men in high-school uniforms or dress-coats, some of whom glanced at me with indifference, and the solemn professors at the farther

end walking freely about between the tables or sitting in large arm-chairs, I at once felt disappointed in my hopes of attracting general attention, and the expression of my face which at home and even at the entrance had denoted some regret that I involuntarily presented so noble and important an appearance, changed to one of much timidity and some dejection. I even went to the opposite extreme and was very glad to see, near me, a very badly and not cleanly dressed man, who though not old was almost completely grey, and who sat apart from the rest on the last bench. I immediately sat down near him and began to scrutinize the candidates and form conclusions about them. There were many figures and faces there, but according to my ideas at that time they could all be divided into three classes.

There were some like myself, who had come to the examination accompanied by tutors or parents, and among these was the younger Ívin with Frost, whom I knew, and Flínka Grap with his old father. All these had fluffy chins, displayed clean linen, and sat quietly without opening the books and papers they had brought with them, looking with evident timidity at the professors and the examination tables. The second class of candidates wore high-school uniforms, and many of them already shaved. Most of them knew one another, spoke loudly, used the professors' Christian names, prepared answers to various examination questions, passed their note-books to one another, stepped across the benches, brought pies and sandwiches from outside and ate them then and there, only bending their heads to the level of the benches. And finally a third class of candidates, of whom however there were not many, were quite old; some in dress-coats, but more in long coats and shewing no linen. These were very serious, sat separately, and looked very dismal.

The student who had comforted me by being cer-

tainly worse dressed than myself, belonged to this third category. Leaning on his elbows with his head between his hands and with his greyish hair sticking out between his fingers, he was reading a book, and giving me only a momentary and not very friendly glance with his glittering eyes, frowned morosely and protruded a shiny elbow to prevent my coming closer. The high-school pupils on the contrary were too sociable, and I was a bit afraid of them. One, pushing a book into my hand, said, 'Hand it on to him, there.' Another, as he passed me, said 'Let me pass, lad.' A third, as he climbed across a bench, leant his hand on my shoulder as if it were a desk. All this seemed strange and unpleasant to me; I regarded myself as far superior to these high-school pupils and considered that they ought not to allow themselves such familiarities with me. At last names were called out. The high-school pupils went forward boldly, and generally answered well and came back cheerful; our set were much more timid and, it seemed, did not answer so well. Of the older ones some answered excellently, others very badly.

When the name Semënov was called, my neighbour with the greyish hair and glittering eyes pushed by me roughly, stepped across my legs, and went up to the table. One could see by the professors' looks that he answered excellently and confidently. When he returned to his place he quietly gathered up his notebook and left without waiting to hear what mark he had received. I had already shuddered several times at the sound of the voice that called out the names, but my turn in the alphabetical order had not yet come though some names beginning with an 'I' were already being called. 'Ikónin and Tényev!' some one suddenly called out from the professors' corner. A chill ran down my back and hair.

'Who was called? Who is "Bartényev"?' people said near me.

'Ikónin, go; you are being called. But who "Bartényev" or "Mordényev" is, I don't know.' 'Own up!' said a tall, red-cheeked, high-school student standing beside me.

'It 's you,' said St. Jérôme.

'My name is Irtényev,' I said to the red-cheeked high-school student. 'Did they call Irtényev?'

'Why, yes! Why don't you go? . . . Just see what a dandy!' he said, not loud but so that I heard his words as I passed between the benches. In front of me walked Ikónin, a tall young man of about twenty-five, who belonged to the third category—the old ones. He wore a tight, olive dress-coat and a blue satin cravat, over which his long, fair hair was carefully combed behind, *à la moujik*. I had noticed his appearance while we were still sitting on the benches. He was not bad looking and was talkative, but what struck me most was the strange red hair which he had allowed to grow on his throat, and the yet stranger habit he had of continually unbuttoning his waistcoat and scratching his chest under his shirt.

Three professors were sitting at the table to which Ikónin and I went up; not one of them acknowledged our bow. A young professor was shuffling the question slips like a pack of cards; another, with a star attached to his coat, was looking at a high-school student who was rapidly saying something about Charlemagne, adding 'finally' after every sentence, and the third professor, an old man, sat with bowed head, looked at us over his spectacles, and pointed to the question-slips. I felt that his look was directed collectively to Ikónin and to me and that something about us displeased him—possibly Ikónin's red hair—for, again looking at us both, he made an impatient gesture with his head for us to hurry up and draw our tickets. I was vexed and offended, first that no one had answered our bow, and secondly that I was evidently coupled with Ikónin as the same sort of candidate, and

that there should already be a prejudice against me on account of Ikónin's red hair. I drew a ticket without timidity and was about to answer the question on it, but the professor indicated Ikónin by a look. I read the question on my ticket. It was one I knew, and quietly awaiting my turn I watched what went on before me. Ikónin was not at all intimidated and, with his side to the table, even moved too boldly to draw a ticket, shook back his hair, and briskly read the question written on the slip. He opened his mouth to begin his answer, I supposed, when the professor who wore the star, having dismissed the high-school pupil with commendation, suddenly looked at Ikónin. The latter seemed to remember something and stopped. There was a general silence for about two minutes.

'Well?' said the professor in spectacles.

Ikónin opened his mouth and again said nothing.

'You are not the only one here, you know! Will you please answer or not?' asked the young professor, but Ikónin did not even look at him. He gazed intently at the ticket and did not utter a word. The spectacled professor looked at him through his glasses, and over his glasses, and without his glasses, for he had had time to take them off, wipe them carefully, and to put them on again. Ikónin had not uttered a word. Suddenly a smile flashed across his face; he shook back his hair and, again turning his whole side to the table, put down his ticket, looked at each of the professors in turn, then at me, turned round, and swinging his arms went back with brisk strides to the bench. The professors exchanged looks.

'He's a nice one . . .' said the young professor, 'a paying pupil!'

<sup>1</sup> A large number of pupils had their fees, and even their board and lodging, paid out of university funds, and those well enough off to pay their own way were regarded as rather exceptional.

I moved up to the table, but the professors continued to talk almost in whispers among themselves as if none of them even suspected that I was there. I was, at the time, firmly convinced that all three professors were deeply interested in the question whether I should pass my examination and whether I should pass it well, but that just to give themselves airs they pretended it did not matter to them at all and that they did not notice me.

When the spectacled professor addressed me in a tone of indifference and asked me to reply to the question I had drawn, I looked into his eyes and felt a little ashamed for him, on account of his duplicity towards me, and I became a little confused when I began to answer; but it soon became easier and easier, and as the question was one in Russian history, which I knew excellently, I finished brilliantly and even got into the swing of it so that, wishing to make the professors feel that I was not Ikónin, and could not be mixed up with him, I offered to draw another ticket; but the professor gave me a nod, said, "That's all right," and put something down in his book. As soon as I returned to the benches, I was told by the high-school pupils, who (heaven knows how) seemed to know everything, that I had received the highest mark---a five.

## XI

### THE EXAMINATION IN MATHEMATICS

At the next examination, besides Grap whom I considered unworthy of my acquaintance and Ívin who seemed rather shy of me, I had a number of new acquaintances, some of whom greeted me. Ikónin even seemed glad to see me and informed me that he would be re-examined in history, that the professor of history had a grudge against him since last year's examination when, as he said, he had also *balked* him.

Seménov—who like me was entering the mathematical faculty—avoided everybody throughout the examination, sat silently by himself, leaning on his elbows with his fingers thrust through his greyish hair, and passed his examination excellently. He came out second: a pupil of the First High-School was first. He was tall, lean, dark-haired, and very pale; his cheek was bandaged with a black scarf, and his forehead covered with pimples. His hands were thin, red, with very long fingers, and nails so bitten away that his finger-tips looked as if they had threads tied round them. All this seemed to me excellent, and exactly as it should be in the case of a First High-School student. He spoke to every one like anybody else, and even I made his acquaintance, but yet it seemed to me that in his gait, in the movement of his lips and in his black eyes, something unusual, *magnetic*, was noticeable.

I came to my mathematical examination earlier than usual. I knew the subject pretty well, but there were two questions in algebra which I had somehow kept back from my tutor and which I did not know at all. They were, as I still remember, the theory of associations and Newton's binomial theorem. I sat down on the back form and began looking up these two unfamiliar questions; but not being accustomed to work in a noisy room and fearing I should not have sufficient time, I was unable to concentrate on what I was reading.

'There he is! Come here, Nekhlyúdob!' I heard Volódyá's familiar voice behind me.

I turned and saw my brother and Dmítri, who with their coats unbuttoned and swinging their arms, were coming towards me between the benches. One could see at once that they were students in the second year, quite at home in the university. The mere look of their unbuttoned coats sufficed to express their contempt for us who were only matriculating, and evoked our envy and respect. I was much flattered to think



that all around us could see that I was acquainted with two students of the second year, and quickly rose to meet them.

Volódya could not refrain from expressing his feeling of superiority.

'Oh, you poor wretch!' he said. 'Not been examined yet?'

'No.'

'What are you reading? Haven't you prepared it?'

'Just two questions . . . not quite. I don't understand this.'

'What? Is it this?' said Volódya, and began explaining Newton's binomial theorem to me, but so rapidly and indistinctly that, reading a distrust of his knowledge in my eyes, he glanced at Dmítiri and, no doubt, reading the same in his eyes, blushed, but still went on saying something I did not understand.

'No, wait, Volódya, let me go over it with him if there's time,' said Dmítiri and, having glanced at the professors' corner, he sat down beside me.

I noticed at once that my friend was in that mild frame of mind which always came over him when he was satisfied with himself and which I particularly liked in him. As he was good at mathematics and spoke clearly, he went through the question with me so well that I remember it till now. But he had scarcely finished when St. Jérôme said in a loud whisper, '*à vous,*<sup>1</sup> *Nicholas!*' and, following Ikónin, I got out from between the forms without having had time to go through the other question I did not know. I came up to the table at which sat two professors, near whom a high-school pupil stood at the black-board. The pupil was vigorously chalking up a formula, noisily breaking the chalk against the board, and went on writing though the professor had already said, 'That's enough,' and had told us to draw question-tickets. 'Suppose I draw the theory of associa-

<sup>1</sup> Your turn.

tions!' I thought, taking a ticket with trembling fingers out from among the soft heap of bits of paper. Ikónin, with the same bold gesture as at the previous examination, swaying with his whole side, took the top ticket without choosing, looked at it and frowned angrily.

'I always get such demons!' he muttered.

I looked at mine. Oh, horror! It was the theory of associations . . . !

'And what have you got?' asked Ikónin.

I showed him.

'I know that one,' he said.

'Will you change?'

'No, it's all the same. I feel I am not in the right mood,' Ikónin barely had time to whisper this, before the professor called us to the board.

'Now all is lost!' I thought:—'Instead of passing my examinations brilliantly as I meant to do, I shall for ever be covered with shame, worse than Ikónin.' But suddenly Ikónin turned to me, under the professor's eyes, snatched the ticket from my hand and gave me his. I looked at it, it was Newton's binomial.

The professor was not an old man and had a pleasant, intelligent expression, due chiefly to the extremely protruding lower part of his forehead.

'What is that? Are you exchanging tickets?' he asked.

'No, he only let me have a look at his, Professor,' Ikónin replied readily, and again 'Professor' was the last word he uttered while standing there, and again as he passed me on his way back, he glanced at the professor and at me, smiled, and shrugged his shoulders with a gesture that seemed to say, 'Never mind, friend!' (I later learnt that Ikónin was up for the entrance examinations for the third time.)

I answered the question that I had just been preparing excellently—the professor even said that I had answered better than could be expected, and he gave me a five.

## XII

## THE EXAMINATION IN LATIN

ALL went splendidly until the Latin examination. The High-School pupil with the bandaged face was first, Seménov second, and I third. I even began to grow proud, and seriously thought that, despite my youth, I was far from being negligible.

From the first examination everybody had spoken with dread of the Latin professor, as a beast who delighted in ruining young men, especially paying-students, and who was said to speak only in Latin or Greek. St. Jérôme, who had coached me in Latin, encouraged me, and I myself thought that, as I translated Cicero and some Odes of Horace without a dictionary and knew Zumpt's grammar by heart, I was not worse prepared than others; but it turned out otherwise. The whole morning one heard only of the failure of those who went up before me; one had a nought given him, another a one, a third had in addition been scolded and threatened with expulsion, and so on. Only Seménov and the First High-School pupil went up calmly and came back as usual having both received fives. I already had a foreboding of misfortune when Ikónin and I were called up together to the small table at which the terrible professor sat all by himself. He was a small, lean, sallow man, with long greasy hair and a very melancholy physiognomy.

He handed Ikónin a volume of Cicero's speeches, and told him to translate from it.

To my great surprise Ikónin not only read, but even translated a few lines with the aid of the professor who prompted him. Feeling my superiority to such a weak competitor I could not help smiling, even rather contemptuously, when it came to parsing and Ikónin, as previously, subsided into hopeless silence. I hoped

my intelligent and slightly ironical smile would please the professor, but it had the contrary effect.

'You, no doubt, know it better since you smile,' said the professor to me in bad Russian. 'Let us see. Well, you tell it.'

I afterwards heard that the Latin professor favoured Ikónin, and that Ikónin even lodged with him. I immediately answered the question in syntax that had been put to Ikónin, but the professor assumed a sorrowful expression and turned away from me.

'All right. Your turn will come and we'll see how much you know,' he said without looking at me, and he began explaining to Ikónin the question he had put to him.

'You may go,' he said, and I saw him put down a four for Ikónin in the book of marks. 'Oh,' I thought, 'he is not at all as severe as they said.' After Ikónin had gone, for what must have been five minutes but seemed to me like five hours he arranged the books and tickets, blew his nose, moved his arm-chair lolling about in it, looked down the hall, from side to side, and everywhere except at me. All this pretence did not however satisfy him; he opened a book and pretended to be reading it, as if I were not there at all. I drew nearer and coughed.

'Ah, yes, you are still here! . . . Well, translate something,' he said, handing me a book. 'But no, better this one.' He turned over the pages of a volume of Horace and opened it for me at a place which, it seemed to me, no one could ever translate.

'I have not prepared this,' I said.

'So you want to answer only what you have learnt by heart? That's good . . .! No, translate this.'

I began to struggle with the meaning as best I could, but at every interrogative look of mine the professor shook his head, sighed, and said, 'No.' At last he closed the book with such nervous abruptness that he pinched his finger between the pages. Angrily with-

drawing it from there, he handed me a ticket with a question in grammar on it and leaning back in his chair sat in most ominous silence. I began to answer, but the expression of his face fettered my tongue and everything I said seemed to me wrong.

‘Not that, not that at all!’ he suddenly uttered with his bad pronunciation, rapidly changing his position, leaning his elbows on the table and playing with a gold ring that loosely fitted one of the lean fingers of his left hand. ‘It won’t do to prepare like that, sir, for a higher educational institution; you all want only to wear a uniform with a blue collar; you skim things over and imagine that you can be students. No sir, one must study a subject thoroughly . . .’ and so forth, and so forth.

During the whole of this speech, delivered in faulty Russian, I gazed with dull attention at his drooping eyes. At first I was tormented by disappointment at not being third, then by fear that I should not pass the examination at all, and finally to this was added a consciousness of injustice, offended self-esteem, and unmerited humiliation; besides which, contempt of the professor for not being, to my ideas, *comme il faut*—as I discovered when I noticed his short, hard, and round nails—still further inflamed me and made all these feelings venomous. After glancing at me and noticing my trembling lips and eyes full of tears, he seemed to interpret my agitation as an appeal for a better mark, and, as if taking pity on me, he said (and this in the presence of another professor, who had just come up):

‘All right, I will give you a pass-mark (that meant he would give me a two), though you have not deserved it, but this only out of consideration for your youth and in the hope that in the university you will not be so frivolous.’

The last sentence, spoken in the presence of another professor, who looked at me as if he too were saying: ‘There, you see, young man!’ completed my con-

fusion. There was a moment when my eyes grew clouded: the terrible professor with his table seemed to me to be sitting somewhere far off, and a wild thought entered into my head with dreadful, one-sided clearness: 'What if I were to . . .? What would come of it?' But for some reason I did not do *that*! On the contrary I unconsciously bowed with particular respect to both professors and, with a slight smile—the very same smile, I fancy, as Ikónin's—I left the table.

This injustice affected me so strongly at the time that had I been free to do as I pleased I should not have gone up for the other examinations. I lost all my ambition (it was useless even to think any longer of being third) and I got through the rest of the examinations without taking any pains and even without agitation. My marks, however, averaged over four, but this did not interest me at all. I made up my mind, and proved to myself very clearly, that it was extremely silly and even *mauvais genre*<sup>1</sup> to try to be first, but that, like Volódya, I ought neither to be too low nor too high up. I intended to adhere to this plan in future in the university, though on this point I disagreed for the first time with my friend.

I now thought only of my uniform, my cocked hat, my private trap, my own room, and, above all, my freedom.

### XIII

#### I AM GROWN UP

HOWEVER, these thoughts also had a charm<sup>2</sup> of their own.

When I returned home on the 8th of May after the examination in scripture—the final one—I found the tailor's assistant from Rosánov's, whom I knew as he had previously brought a uniform of smooth, shimmer-

<sup>1</sup> Bad form.

ing, black cloth which was only tacked together, and had marked the lapels with chalk, and who had now brought the finished suit, with its glittering gilt buttons wrapped in tissue paper.

Having put on that suit and found it excellent, though St. Jérôme assured me that the back of the coat wrinkled, I went downstairs with a self-satisfied smile which involuntarily spread over my face, and went in to Volódya, aware though pretending not to notice that the servants were eagerly gazing at me from the passage and the anteroom. Gabriel, the major-domo, overtook me in the ballroom, congratulated me on entering the university, handed me, by papa's orders, four twenty-five ruble notes, and said, also by papa's orders, that the coachman Kuzmá, a dróshki, and the bay horse, Beauty, were from that day at my entire disposal. I was so delighted with this almost unexpected happiness, that I could not pretend to Gabriel to be indifferent, but, rather confused and breathless, uttered the first thing that came into my head. I think it was: 'Beauty is a splendid trotter.' Having glanced at the heads appearing through the doors of the anteroom and the passage and unable to restrain myself any longer, I ran full speed through the ballroom in my new coat with the bright gilt buttons. As I entered Volódya's room I heard behind me the voices of Dubkóv and Nekhlyúdov, who had come to congratulate me and to propose that we should go to dine somewhere and drink champagne in honour of my matriculation. Dmítri told me that, though he did not like drinking champagne, he would drink some that day to our friendship. Dubkóv for some reason said I looked like a colonel; Volódya did not congratulate me and only remarked very drily that we should now be able to go to the country the day after to-morrow; as if though glad I had entered the university, he did not quite like my being as grown up as he was. St. Jérôme, who also came

in to us, said very pompously that his duty was at an end, that he did not know whether he had fulfilled it well or ill, but he had done all he could, and would move to-morrow to his Count's house. I felt that involuntarily in response to all that was said to me, a sweet, happy, rather stupidly self-satisfied smile showed itself on my face, and I even noticed that this smile communicated itself to all who spoke to me.

So I no longer have a tutor, I have my own dróshki, my name is printed in the list of students, I have a sword at my belt, policemen may sometimes salute me . . . I am grown up and I seem to be happy.

We decided to dine at Yar's after four o'clock, but as Volódya went to Dubkóv's and Dmítiri also disappeared as was his wont, saying that he had something to do before dinner, I had two hours to spend as I pleased. For some time I walked through all the rooms and looked in all the mirrors, now with my coat buttoned up, now quite unbuttoned, and now buttoned only at the top, and every way it seemed splendid. Then, though ashamed to show too much joy, I could not refrain from going to the stable and coach-house to see Beauty, Kuzmá, and the trap. Then I went back and again walked through the rooms, looking in the mirrors, counting the money in my pocket, and still smiling in the same happy way. However, before an hour had passed I began to feel rather dull and to regret that there was nobody to see me in this brilliant condition, and I felt I needed movement and activity. So I gave orders to harness Beauty and made up my mind that I had better go to the Smith's Bridge Street to do some shopping.

I remembered that when Volódya entered the university he had bought some engravings of horses by Victor Adam, and some tobacco and pipes, and I felt it essential to do the same.

Gazed at from every side, with the sun shining on my gilt buttons, on the cockade of my hat, and on my



sword, I reached the Smith's Bridge Street and stopped at Dazziaro's picture-shop. Looking around me, I entered. I did not wish to buy horses by Victor Adam that I might not be accused of aping Volódyá but, hurrying because ashamed of the trouble I was giving the obliging shopman, I chose a woman's head drawn in gouache, which was in the window, and paid twenty rubles for it. However, after paying the twenty rubles I still felt uncomfortable at having troubled two such well-dressed shopmen about such a trifle, besides which, they still seemed to regard me too indifferently. Wishing to show them who I was, I turned my attention to a little silver object which lay under glass, and having learnt that it was a pencil-case which cost eighteen rubles, I asked them to wrap it up and, having paid, and learnt that good pipes and tobacco could be got at the shop next door, I bowed politely to the shopmen and went out with the picture under my arm. In the neighbouring shop, which had a negro smoking a cigar on its signboard, again not wishing to imitate any one, I bought, not Zhúkov but Turkish tobacco, a Stamboul pipe, and two limewood and rosewood pipe-stems. On stepping out of the shop to my dróshki, I saw Seménov walking with rapid strides along the pavement in ordinary clothes and with head bent. Vexed that he did not recognize me, I said rather loudly, 'Here, Kuzmá!', got into the dróshki, and overtook Seménov.

'Good-day,' I said to him.

'My respects to you,' he replied, and went on.

'Why aren't you in uniform?' I asked.

Semenov stopped, screwing up his eyes and showing his white teeth as if it hurt him to look at the sun, but in reality to express his indifference to my dróshki and uniform, he looked at me in silence and went on.

From the Smith's Bridge Street I went to a confectioner's on the Tverskáya Street and, though I wished to appear chiefly interested in the newspapers they

had there, I could not refrain from eating one pastry after another. Though I felt ashamed of the gentleman who looked at me with curiosity from behind his paper, I ate very rapidly one of each of the eight kinds of pastry they had in the shop.

When I got home I had a slight feeling of heartburn; but taking no notice of it, I began to examine my purchases. I liked the picture so little that I did not put it in a frame and hang it up in my room as Volódya had done with his engraving, but hid it carefully behind the chest of drawers where no one could see it. At home I did not like the pencil-case either, so I put it into the table drawer, comforting myself with the reflection that it was silver and therefore of value, and very useful for a student. The smoking appliances however I decided to make use of at once and to try them.

Having opened the quarter-pound packet, I filled the Stamboul pipe with the reddish-yellow, finely cut Turkish tobacco, put a bit of burning tinder on it, and taking the mouthpiece between my second and third fingers—a position of a hand that pleased me very much—I began to draw in the smoke.

The odour of the tobacco was very pleasant, but there was a bitter taste in my mouth and the smoke choked me. However, I persisted and smoked for a longish time, trying to blow out the smoke in rings and to inhale it. The whole room was soon filled with bluish clouds of smoke. The pipe began to creak, the hot tobacco to jump, I felt a bitterness in my mouth and a slight dizziness in my head. I was going to stop smoking, and only wished just to have a look at myself in the glass with the pipe when, to my astonishment, my feet stumbled, the room began going round, and glancing into the glass which I had reached with difficulty, I saw that my face was as white as a sheet. I had hardly time to fall on the sofa before I felt so sick and so faint that, imagining pipes to be deadly

for me, it seemed to me that I was dying. I grew seriously frightened, and thought of calling for help and sending for a doctor.

That fear however did not last long. I soon understood what was the matter with me, and lay on the sofa for a long time with a badly aching head and feeling quite weak, gazing with dull attention at the trade-mark of Bostanzhóglo on the packet of tobacco, at the pipe which lay on the floor, at the lumps of tobacco and at some remains of the pastry; and disillusioned and sad, I thought that I was probably not yet quite grown up if I could not smoke as others did, and that evidently I was not fated to hold a mouth-piece between my second and third fingers, to inhale, and to emit the smoke through a brown moustache.

Dmítri, who came for me towards five o'clock, found me in this unpleasant condition. After drinking a glass of water however I felt almost well again and was ready to go with him.

'What makes you want to smoke?' he said, looking at the relics of my smoking. 'It is so stupid, and a useless waste of money. I have made up my mind not to smoke. . . . However, come along! We have still to call for Dubkóv.'

#### XIV

### WHAT VOLÓDYA AND DUBKÓV WERE DOING

As soon as Dmítri entered my room I saw by his expression, the way he walked, and a peculiar gesture he made whenever he was in bad humour—blinking with one eye and jerking his head strangely to one side as if adjusting his tic—that he was in one of the cold, stubborn moods that came over him when he was dissatisfied with himself, and always had a chilling effect on my feeling for him. Of late I had begun to

observe and judge my friend's character, but our friendship had not changed at all in consequence: it was still so young and strong that from whatever side I regarded Dmítri I could not help considering him perfect. There were two different men in him, who both seemed splendid to me. One, whom I ardently loved, was kind, affectionate, meek, bright, and himself conscious of these amiable qualities. When he was in this mood his whole appearance, the sound of his voice, and all his movements, seemed to say: 'I am meek and virtuous and enjoy being meek and virtuous, and you can all see this.' The other—whom I had just begun to discover and before whose majesty I bowed—was cold, severe with himself and with others, proud, fanatically religious and pedantically moral. At this moment he was that second man.

With the frankness that constituted an essential condition of our relations, I told him, when we had seated ourselves in the dróshki, that I was sad and pained to see him on this day of my happiness, in a mood so depressing and uncongenial to me.

'Something must have upset you. Why don't you tell me?' I asked.

'Nicholas!' he answered, deliberately, nervously jerking his head to one side and blinking, 'since I have given you my word not to hide anything from you, you have no cause to suspect me of secretiveness. One cannot always be in the same mood and if anything has upset me, I can't account for it myself.'

'What a wonderfully frank and honest nature he has!' I thought, and did not address him again.

We reached Dubkóv's in silence. His apartments struck me as extraordinarily fine. There were everywhere rugs, pictures, hangings, bright wallpapers, portraits, carved easy chairs and lounge chairs, and on the wall hung guns, pistols, tobacco-pouches and some animals' heads of papier-mâché. On seeing his study I realized whom Volódya had imitated when

arranging his rooms. We found Dubkóv and Volódya at cards. Some one I did not know (probably nobody of much consequence, to judge by his humble position) sat by the table following the game very attentively. Dubkóv had on a silk dressing-gown and soft shoes. Volódya, with his coat off, sat on the sofa opposite him and, judging by his flushed face and the cursory dissatisfied glance he snatched for a moment from his cards and threw on us, was greatly absorbed in the game. On seeing me he flushed still more.

'Your deal,' he said to Dubkóv. I understood that he was not pleased at my knowing that he played cards, but his face did not express any confusion. It seemed to say to me: 'Yes, I play, and it surprises you only because you are still so young. It is not only not bad, but is the right thing at our age.'

I felt and realised this immediately.

Dubkóv however did not begin to deal, but rose, shook hands with us, gave us chairs, and offered us pipes, which we refused.

'So here he is, our diplomat, the occasion of our festivities!' said Dubkóv. 'Really, he is awfully like a colonel.'

'H'm!' I muttered, again feeling a silly self-satisfied smile expanding over my face.

I respected Dubkóv as only a sixteen-year-old boy can respect a twenty-seven-year-old adjutant who is said by all the grown-up people to be an extremely well-bred young man, who dances splendidly and speaks French and while at heart despising me for my youth evidently tries to conceal this feeling.

In spite of all my respect for him, during the whole of our acquaintance I always, Heaven knows why, found it difficult and unpleasant to look him in the eye. Later on I noticed that there were three kinds of people into whose eyes I found it awkward to look: those who were much worse than I, those who were much better than I, and those who did not mention,

and to whom I could not mention, things we both were conscious of. Dubkón perhaps was better than I, perhaps worse, but it was certain that he often told lies without admitting it, and that I noticed this weakness of his but of course did not venture to speak to him about it.

‘Let us play another hand!’ said Volódya, jerking his shoulder like papa and shuffling the cards.

‘See how he insists!’ said Dubkón. ‘We could finish later. However, all right, let us play it.’

While they were playing I watched their hands. Volódya had large, fine hands; the angle of his thumb and the curve of his fingers as he held the cards were so like papa’s that at one time I thought he was holding them so in order to be like a grown-up man; but when I glanced at his face it was at once evident that he was thinking of nothing but the game. Dubkón’s hands, on the contrary, were small, plump, bent inwards, extremely adroit and with soft fingers; just the kind of hands which wear rings, and belong to people who are good at craftsmanship and fond of having handsome things.

Volódya must have lost, for the man who was looking at his cards remarked that Vóldemar Petróvich<sup>1</sup> had terribly bad luck, and Dubkón took out his pocket-book, entered something in it, and showing it to Volódya said: ‘Right?’

‘Right!’ said Volódya looking with feigned indifference at the pocket-book. ‘Now let us go.’

Volódya took Dubkón with him, and Dmítri took me in his phaeton.

‘What game were they playing?’ I asked Dmítri.

‘Piquet—a silly game. Card playing in general is silly.’

‘And do they play for high stakes?’

‘Not high, but still it is bad.’

‘And you don’t play?’

<sup>1</sup> The full, formal, and polite way of naming him.

'No, I have vowed not to play; but Dubkóv can't refrain from winning from some one.'

'But that is not right of him,' I said. 'I expect Volódya plays worse than he does.'

'Of course it is not right, but there is nothing particularly bad about it. Dubkóv likes playing and plays well, but he is a capital fellow all the same.'

'But I didn't at all mean . . .' I began.

'No, one must not think anything bad of him, for he really is a fine fellow. I like him very much and shall always like him, in spite of his weakness.'

It seemed to me, just because Dmítiri was taking Dubkóv's part so warmly, that he no longer liked or respected him, but did not admit this out of stubbornness lest any one should accuse him of inconstancy. He was one of those men who love their friends all their lives, not so much because the friends always remain lovable to them as because, having once grown fond of any one even under a misapprehension, they consider it dishonourable to cease to care for him.

## XV

### I AM CONGRATULATED

DUBKÓV and Volódya knew everybody at Yar's by name, and everybody from the hall porter to the proprietor showed them great respect. We were immediately given a private room and served with a wonderful dinner, which Dubkóv chose from a French menu. A bottle of iced champagne, at which I tried to look as unconcerned as possible, was already prepared. The dinner passed off very pleasantly and merrily though Dubkóv, as was his habit, told the strangest stories as if they were really true—among others, how his grandmother had killed with a blunderbuss three brigands who had waylaid her

(which made me blush, lower my eyes, and turn away from him), and though Volódya was evidently uneasy whenever I opened my mouth (which was quite unnecessary, for as far as I remember I said nothing to be much ashamed of). When the champagne was served they all congratulated me, and I crossed hands with Dubkóv and Dmítri, drank 'brotherhood' with them, and we kissed each other. As I did not know who had stood the champagne (it was really on our joint account as was afterwards explained to me), and as I wished to treat my friends with my own money, which I kept feeling in my pocket, I stealthily took out a ten-ruble note, called the waiter, gave him the money, and in a whisper but so that everybody heard for they were all looking at me in silence, asked him to be so good as to bring another half-bottle of champagne. Volódya blushed, jerked his shoulder, and looked in a frightened way at me and at the rest, so that I felt I had made a mistake, but the half-bottle was brought and we drank it with great pleasure. Everything still seemed very jolly. Dubkóv continued to lie unceasingly. Volódya, too, said such funny things and so well—which I never expected of him—that we laughed a great deal. The character of their fun consisted in the imitation and exaggeration of the well-known anecdote: 'Have you been abroad?' asks one, and the other answers, 'No, I haven't, but my brother plays the violin.' They brought this kind of comic inanity to such perfection that telling the original anecdote, they changed the reply into, 'But my brother also never played the violin!' In this manner they answered every question the other put and even without waiting for a question tried to unite the most incongruous ideas and uttered this nonsense with serious faces—and the result was very funny. I began to see what the point was and wished to say something funny myself, but they looked embarrassed, or tried not to look at me whilst I was speaking, and my anec-



dote fell flat. Dubkóv said: 'You have muddled it, brother diplomat,' but after the champagne I had drunk, and in the company of grown-up people, I had such a pleasant feeling that this remark seemed but a pinprick. Dmítri alone, though he drank as much as we did, remained in his severe, serious frame of mind, which somewhat restrained the general gaiety.

'Now listen,' remarked Dubkóv. 'After dinner we must take the diplomat in hand. Should we not take him along to *Auntie's*? We would soon dispose of him there.'

'Nekhlyúdob won't go, you know,' said Volódya.

'Intolerable saint! You are an intolerable saint!' said Dubkóv addressing Dmítri. 'Come with us and you will find that Auntie is a splendid lady.'

'Not only will I not go, but I won't let him go either!' answered Dmítri blushing.

'Whom? The diplomat? You want to go, don't you, diplomat? Look at him, he even quite brightened up as soon as Auntie was mentioned!'

'It 's not exactly that I won't let him go,' continued Dmítri, rising and beginning to pace the room without looking at me—'but I advise him not to go and I don't want him to go. He is not a child now and if he wants to go he can do so without you. But you, Dubkóv, ought to be ashamed of yourself: because you do wrong you want others to do the same.'

'What is there wrong in my inviting you all to a cup of tea at Auntie's?' said Dubkóv, winking at Volódya. 'But if you don't like to go with us, very well! I will go with Volódya. Volódya, you'll come?'

'H'm h'm,' said Volódya affirmatively—'Let's go there and afterwards you will come home with me and we will finish the piquet.'

'Do you want to go with them or not?' asked Dmítri, coming up to me.

'No,' I answered, moving to make room for him beside me on the sofa, where he sat down, 'I really don't

want to go and if you advise me not to, nothing will induce me to go. No,' I added, 'it's not true that I don't want to go with them, but I am glad I am not going.'

'That's capital,' he said. 'Live your own way and don't dance to anyone's fiddle. That's best.'

This little dispute did not at all spoil our pleasure but even heightened it. Dmítri's mood suddenly changed to the gentle one I liked best. The consciousness of having acted well, as I afterwards noticed more and more, had this effect on him. He was now pleased with himself for having restrained me. He became very merry, ordered another bottle of champagne (which was against his rules), invited a stranger into our room, made him drink, sang 'Gaudeamus igitur', invited us all to join in the chorus, and suggested a drive to Sokólniki, to which Dubkóv replied that it would be too sentimental.

'Let us make merry to-day,' said Dmítri with a smile:—'In honour of his entering the university I will get drunk for the first time. It can't be helped!'

This gaiety seemed very strange in Dmítri. He was like a tutor or a kind father who being satisfied with his children is in high spirits and wishes to give them pleasure, and at the same time to prove that it is possible to make merry honestly and decently; but still his unexpected gaiety seemed to act contagiously on me and on the others—the more so since we had each of us drunk nearly half a bottle of champagne.

In this pleasant frame of mind I went out into the large room to light a cigarette which Dubkóv had given me.

When I rose from my seat I noticed that my head felt rather giddy and my arms and legs retained a natural position only as long as I paid special attention to them. Otherwise my legs moved sideways and my arms gesticulated. I fixed my whole attention to these limbs, forced my hands to rise, button my coat

and smooth my hair (during which my elbows jerked up terribly high), and compelled my feet to walk to the door, which they did, but they stepped either very firmly or too gently, and the left foot in particular always stepped on tiptoe. A voice called out, 'Where are you going? They'll bring a candle!' I guessed it was Volódyá's voice and it gave me pleasure to think that after all I had guessed right, but I only gave a slight smile and went on.

## XVI

## THE QUARREL

IN the large room a short, thickset civilian with a red moustache sat eating something at a small table. By him sat a tall, dark, clean-shaven man. They were speaking French. Their looks disturbed me, but nevertheless I decided to light my cigarette at the candle in front of them. Looking about me so as not to meet their eyes, I went up to their table and began lighting my cigarette. When it burnt up I could not resist looking at the man who was dining. His grey eyes were fixed on me attentively and threateningly. I was about to turn away when his red moustache began to move and he said in French, 'I don't like people smoking when I am dining, sir!'

I muttered something incomprehensible.

'No, I don't like it,' continued the man with the moustache severely, with a rapid glance at the clean-shaven man as if inviting him to see what a dressing-down he would give me. 'Nor do I like those who are rude enough to come and smoke under my nose. I do not like them either.'

I realized at once that the man was scolding me, but at first felt very guilty towards him.

'I did not think it would incommode you,' I said.

'Ah, you did not think you were a churl, but I did . . .' shouted the man.

'What right have you to shout?' I said, feeling that he was insulting me, and beginning to grow angry myself.

'This right, that I will never allow anyone to fail in respect to me, and will always give such fellows as you a lesson. What is your name, sir, and where do you live?'

I was much enraged, my lips quivered and I gasped for breath. But I still felt myself to blame, no doubt for drinking too much champagne, and I did not say anything rude to him, but on the contrary let my lips utter my name and address very submissively.

'My name is Kólpikov, sir, and you must be more polite in future! You will hear from me. (*Vous aurez de mes nouvelles*)' he concluded, as the conversation was carried on in French.

I only said: 'Very pleased,' trying to render my voice as firm as possible, and I turned away with the cigarette which had by this time gone out, and went back to our room.

I said nothing of what had happened either to my brother or to my friends, especially as they were warmly discussing something, but I seated myself alone in a corner and began pondering over this strange incident. The words: 'You are a churl, sir! (*un mal élevé*)' kept ringing in my ears, and more and more aroused my indignation. My muzziness had quite passed off. As I was considering how I had acted in this affair, the terrible thought suddenly struck me that I had behaved like a coward. What right had he to attack me? Why didn't he simply tell me that I was incommoding him? Certainly he was in the wrong! Why, when he called me a churl, didn't I say to him: 'A churl, sir, is one who permits himself to be rude.' Or why didn't I simply shout 'Shut up!' That would have been excellent. Why didn't I challenge him to a duel? I hadn't done any of these things, but had just swallowed the offence like a mean coward.

'You are a churl, sir!' rang in my ears continually and irritatingly. 'No, it can't be left like that,' thought I, and I rose with the firm intention of going back to that gentleman and telling him something terrible, even perhaps knocking him on the head with the candlestick if opportunity occurred. I thought of this last intention with the highest delight, but it was not without considerable fear that I went back to the large room. Fortunately Mr. Kólpikov was no longer there, and a waiter, clearing the table, was the only person in the room. I wanted to inform the waiter of what had happened and explain to him that I was not at all to blame, but somehow I changed my mind and went back to our room in a most dismal frame of mind.

'What has happened to our diplomat?' asked Dubkóv. 'He is no doubt deciding the fate of Europe!'

'Oh, leave me in peace!' I said morosely, turning away. After that, pacing the room, I began to consider that Dubkóv was not a nice man at all. 'And why this everlasting joking and calling me "diplomat"? There's nothing kindly about it. All he cares for is to win from Volódya at cards and visit some kind of "Auntie". . . . There's nothing agreeable about him. Whatever he says is a lie or a commonplace, and he always tries to make fun of me. It seems to me that he is simply stupid, besides being a bad man.' I spent about five minutes in such reflections, feeling for some reason a growing hostility to Dubkóv. Dubkóv however took no heed of me, and this irritated me still more. I was even angry with Volódya and Dmítri for talking to him.

'I say, you fellows, we must pour some water on the diplomat!' said Dubkóv suddenly, glancing at me with a smile which seemed to me derisive and even treacherous. 'He is very bad! By heavens, he is bad!'

'One must pour water over you, too. You are bad yourself!' I replied smiling viciously.

This reply must have astonished Dubkóv, but he

turned away indifferently and continued his conversation with Volódya and Dmítri.

I tried to join in their conversation, but felt it quite impossible to dissemble, and again betook myself to my corner, where I remained till our departure.

When the bill had been paid and we were putting on our overcoats, Dubkóv turned to Dmítri and said:

'Well, and where will Orestes and Pylades go? Home, I suppose, to talk of *love*. That's not our plan—we'll call on dear "Auntie"—that's better than your sour friendship.'

'How dare you speak so . . . laughing at us?' I suddenly began, going up very close to him and waving my arms. 'How dare you laugh at feelings you don't understand? I won't allow you to do it! Hold your tongue!' I shouted, and then held my own, not knowing what more to say, and breathless with agitation. Dubkóv was surprised at first, then he tried to smile and take it as a joke, but finally, to my great amazement, grew frightened and lowered his eyes.

'I do not laugh at you at all, nor at your feelings. I only say . . .' he began evasively.

'I dare say!' I shouted, but at that very moment I felt ashamed of myself and sorry for Dubkóv, whose flushed and disconcerted face expressed real suffering.

'What is the matter with you?' Volódya and Dmítri began both at once: 'Nobody wished to hurt your feelings.'

'Yes, he wished to affront me.'

'What a desperate fellow your brother is!' remarked Dubkóv just as he went out of the room so that he could not hear my rejoinder.

Perhaps I might have run after him and said some more insulting things, but just then the waiter who had been present during my encounter with Kólpikov handed me my overcoat and I at once quieted down, only pretending to Dmítri to be sufficiently angry for my sudden appeasement not to seem strange to him.

Next day when Dubkóv and I met in Volódya's room, we did not allude to that incident, but were less intimate, and it was more difficult than ever for us to meet one another's eyes.

The memory of my quarrel with Kólpikov (who however did not send me *de ses nouvelles* either the next day or on any other) remained for many years terribly vivid and painful to me. For perhaps five years after, I shuddered and exclaimed every time I remembered that unavenged insult, but I consoled myself by recalling with satisfaction what a dashing fellow I had shown myself to be in the affair with Dubkóv. Only much later did I begin to see the matter in quite a different light, and to recall my quarrel with Kólpikov with comical amusement and regret the undeserved insult to which I had subjected 'that *good fellow* Dubkóv'.

When that very evening I told Dmítri of my adventure with Kólpikov, whose appearance I minutely described to him, he was extremely surprised.

'Yes, he's the very man!' he said. 'Fancy, this Kólpikov is a notorious good-for-nothing and card-sharper, but above all a coward who was expelled from his regiment by his fellow-officers for having had his face smacked and being unwilling to fight a duel. Where did he get the pluck from?' he added, looking at me with a good-natured smile. 'But he said nothing worse than "churl"?"

'No'—I began, and blushed.

'It's impolite, but it's no great matter!' Dmítri consoled me.

Only long after, thinking over the circumstance quietly, I reached the rather probable conclusion that Kólpikov feeling that it was safe to attack me, in the presence of the dark, clean-shaven man, avenged on me after many years the slap he had received, just as I had at once avenged his calling me a 'churl' on the innocent Dubkóv.

## XVII

## I PREPARE TO PAY VISITS

ON waking early the next morning my first thought was of the incident with Kólpikov; again I groaned and ran up and down the room, but there was nothing to be done; besides, it was my last day in Moscow and papa had told me to call on those whose names he had put on a sheet of paper.

Papa's attention to us was not concerned so much with our morals or education as with our social connexions. This is what was written on the sheet, in his broken, rapid hand-writing: '1) On Prince Iván, *without fail*; 2) On the Ívins, *without fail*; 3) On Prince Michael; 4) On Princess Nekhlyúdova and Madame Valákhina if you have time. And of course on the curator, the rector, and the professors.'

Dmítri dissuaded me from paying the latter visits, saying that it was not only unnecessary but even improper; but the others had all to be paid that very day. I particularly dreaded the first two visits, marked '*without fail*'. Prince Iván held the rank of *Général-en-chef*, and was a rich old man living alone, so that I, a sixteen-year-old student, had to meet him personally, which I surmised could not be pleasant for me. The Ívins also were wealthy, and their father was some highly-placed official, who had only once called at our house while grandmamma was still alive. After grandmamma's death I had noticed that the youngest Ívin avoided us and seemed to give himself airs. The eldest Ívin, I had heard, had taken his degree in jurisprudence and had a post in Petersburg; and the second, Sergéy, whom I had once adored, was also in Petersburg—a big, fat cadet in the *Corps des Pages*.

In my youth I not only disliked intercourse with people who considered themselves above me, but such



relations were unbearably painful to me on account of my incessant fear of being insulted and of the strain put on my mental faculties by my endeavours to prove to them my independence. However, if I did not obey papa's last injunctions I had to atone for this by obeying the first ones. I was pacing the room, examining my clothes, my sword, and my hat—all laid out on chairs—and was preparing to go, when old Grap, accompanied by Īlinka, arrived to congratulate me. Grap, the father, was a Russified German, unbearably smooth-tongued, fawning, and frequently intoxicated. For the most part he used to come to us to ask for something, and papa occasionally invited him into his study, but never had him to dine with us. His servility and importunity were so merged in a kind of superficial good-nature and familiarity with our house, that everybody considered his ostensible affection for us all as a great merit, but I somehow did not like him and whenever he spoke felt ashamed for him.

The arrival of these two visitors much annoyed me, and I did not try to hide my vexation. I was so accustomed to look down on Īlinka, and he was so accustomed to consider us right in doing so, that it was rather unpleasant to me that he should now be a student like myself. It seemed to me that he too felt rather guilty towards me on that account. I greeted them coolly and did not ask them to sit down, feeling awkward about doing so and thinking that they could do it without being asked, and I ordered the drozhki to be got ready. Īlinka was a kindly, very honest, and by no means stupid young man, but he was very sentimental; he was often overcome—apparently without reason—by some extreme emotion: now tearfulness, now laughter, now touchiness, on the slightest provocation; and he seemed now to be in that last frame of mind. He said nothing, looked malevolently at me and at his father, and only when addressed answered with the submissive, forced smile, under

which he was already accustomed to hide his feelings, and especially the feeling of shame for his father, which he could not but experience before us.

'Well, Nicholas Petróvich,' said the old man to me, following me about the room while I was dressing, and slowly and respectfully turning between his thick fingers a silver snuff-box my grandmother had given him,—'as soon as I heard from my son that you had passed your examinations so brilliantly—of course everybody knows what a brain you have—I at once hastened to congratulate you. Why, I used to carry you on my shoulder, and God is witness that I love you all like my own kin, and my Ílinka kept asking to come. He too is used to you.'

Ílinka meanwhile was sitting silently by the window, apparently examining my cocked hat, and just audibly muttering something angrily through his nose.

'But what I wanted to ask you, Nicholas Petróvich,' the old man went on, 'is whether my Ílinka passed his examinations well? He says you and he will be together, so please don't abandon him. Look after him a bit and advise him.'

'Why, he passed splendidly,' I answered, glancing at Ílinka, who, feeling my eye on him, blushed and ceased moving his lips.

'And may he spend the day with you?' asked the old man, with such a timid smile as if he were afraid of me, and following me about so closely wherever I went that the smell of liquor and tobacco, with which he seemed to be impregnated, did not leave me for a second. I was vexed that he put me in such a false position towards his son and that he distracted my attention from what was then to me a very important occupation—dressing; but above all that smell of spirits which pursued me, so upset me that I replied very coldly that I could not remain with Ílinka because I should be out all day.

'Why, father, you meant to go to sister's,' said Ílinka

smiling and not looking at me, 'and I too have something I must do.'

I felt still more annoyed and confused, and to smooth over my refusal hastened to inform them that I should not be at home because I had to call on *prince* Iván, on *princess* Kornakóva, on the Ívins—the one who had such a distinguished position—and that I should, no doubt, dine with *princess* Nekhlyúdova. It seemed to me that if they knew what important people I was going to see, they could not take exception to my refusal. When they were ready to go I invited Ílinka to come to see me another day, but Ílinka only muttered something with a forced smile. It was evident that he would never set foot again in my room.

I followed them out, and drove to pay my calls. Volódya, whom I had asked in the morning to go with me that it might not be so awkward for me, had declined, on the pretext that it would be too sentimental an affair for two brothers to drive together in one small conveyance.

## XVIII

### THE VALÁKHINS

So I went alone. I called first on the Valákhins, who lived nearest to us in the Sívtsev Vrazhók. I had not seen Sónya for about three years and my love for her had of course passed away long ago, but in my soul a vivid and touching memory of that childish love remained. It had happened during those three years, that I had sometimes thought of her so strongly and clearly that I had shed tears and felt myself again in love, but this had lasted only for a few minutes and did not soon recur.

I knew that Sónya and her mother had been abroad for two years, and I had been told that they had had

an accident in a diligence, and that Sónya's face had been all cut by the glass, which had greatly spoilt her looks. On the way to their house I vividly recalled the former Sónya and wondered what she would now be like. On account of her two years' stay abroad, I somehow imagined her as being extremely tall, with a beautiful figure, serious and majestic but extraordinarily attractive. My imagination refused to picture her face as disfigured by scars; but having heard of a passionate lover somewhere who remained true to the object of his love despite her disfigurement by smallpox, I tried to fancy myself in love with Sónya in order to have the merit of remaining true to her in spite of her scars. I was not really in love as I approached the Valákhins' house, but having aroused the memories of my former love, I was well prepared to fall in love and much wished to do so, especially as I had long felt ashamed to be left behind by my comrades when I saw all of them in love.

The Valákhins lived in a small neat wooden house with an entrance from a yard. On ringing the bell—which was then still quite a rarity in Moscow—the door was opened by a tiny, neatly-dressed boy. He could not, or would not, tell me whether his mistress was at home, but leaving me alone in the dark hall, ran away into a still darker passage.

I remained alone for some time in that dark hall, which besides the front door and that leading into the passage had a third door which was closed. And I was somewhat surprised at the gloomy character of the house, but rather fancied that this was as it should be when the owners had been abroad. In about five minutes the door leading into the parlour was opened from within by the same boy, who led me to a neat but not luxurious drawing-room, into which Sónya came just after.

She was seventeen, very small, thin, and with a sallow unhealthy complexion. No scars were notice-

able on her face, but the lovely prominent eyes and her bright good-natured smile were the same I had known and loved in childhood. I had not at all expected her to be like this and so I could not at once yield to the feelings I had prepared on my way there. She gave me her hand in the English fashion—which was at that time as great a novelty as a door-bell—pressed my hand frankly, and made me sit near her on the sofa.

‘Oh, how glad I am to see you, dear Nicholas,’ she said, looking in my face with so sincere an expression of pleasure that I felt a friendly and not a patronizing tone in the words ‘dear Nicholas’. To my surprise she was, after her journey abroad, even simpler, sweeter, and more of a relation than before. I noticed two small scars near her nose and upon an eyebrow, but her beautiful eyes and smile were true to my memory of them and shone as of old.

‘How you have changed!’ she said. ‘You’re quite grown up. And I . . . how do you find me?’

‘Oh, I should not have known you,’ I replied, although I was just thinking that I should have known her anywhere. I again felt myself in the same care-free happy mood as when I danced ‘Grossvater’ with her at grandmamma’s ball, five years before.

‘Why? Have I grown much plainer?’ she asked, shaking her little head.

‘No, not at all, only grown a little, and become older,’ I hastened to answer. ‘But on the contrary . . . and even . . .’

‘Well, no matter! Do you remember our dances and games—St. Jérôme and Mme. Dorat?’ (I did not remember any Mme. Dorat; she was evidently carried away by the pleasure of childish reminiscences and confused them.) ‘Ah, that was a lovely time!’ she continued, and the same smile or even a better one than I carried in my recollections, and the same eyes, shone before me. While she was speaking I had time

to consider the condition I was in at the moment, and decided that at that moment I was in love. As soon as I had decided this, my happy care-free mood vanished, and a kind of mist covered all that was before me—even her eyes and smile; I felt ashamed of something, blushed, and lost the power of speech.

‘Times have changed,’ she continued, sighing and slightly raising her eyebrows. ‘Things are much worse now, and we too, is it not so, Nicholas?’

I could not answer, and looked at her in silence.

‘Where are all the Ívins, and Kornakóvs, of those days? Do you remember them?’ she went on, looking at my flushed and frightened face with some curiosity. ‘It was a glorious time!’

Still I could not reply.

I was released for a while from this depressing condition by the entrance of Madame Valákhina. I rose, bowed, and regained my power of speech; but on the other hand a strange change took place in Sónya on her mother’s arrival. All her cheerfulness and familiarity vanished, even her smile changed, and except for her stature she suddenly became the sort of young lady from abroad that I had expected to find. There seemed no reason for such a change, for her mother smiled just as pleasantly and in all her movements evinced the same gentleness as of old. She sat down in a large armchair and pointed me to a seat near by. She said something to her daughter in English, and Sónya at once went out, which still further relieved me. Madame Valákhina inquired about my family, my brother, and father, then spoke to me of her bereavement—the loss of her husband—and at last, feeling that she had nothing more to speak about to me, looked at me in silence, as if to say: ‘If you get up now, make your bow, and go, you will be doing very well, my dear!’ but a strange thing happened to me. Sónya returned with some needlework and sat down in another corner of the room so that I felt her glances

upon me. While her mother was telling me about the loss of her husband I had again remembered that I was in love and fancied that the mother had already guessed it, and I was again overcome by so strong an attack of shyness as to feel unable to move a single limb naturally. I knew that in order to get up and go away I should have to think of how to place my foot, what to do with my head and with my hand—in short, I felt almost as I had done the evening before, when I had drunk half a bottle of champagne. I felt that I should not be able to manage it all, and that I therefore *could not* rise, and I really *could not* do so. Madame Valákhina was no doubt surprised to see my face as red as a lobster and my complete immobility; but I made up my mind that it would be better to continue sitting in that stupid condition than to risk getting up and going away awkwardly. So I sat for some time hoping that some unforeseen occurrence would help me out of this predicament. The occurrence presented itself in the shape of an ungainly young man who entered the room like one quite at home there, and bowed politely to me. Madame Valákhina rose, excusing herself by saying that she had to speak to her *homme d'affaire*,<sup>1</sup> and looked at me with a puzzled expression which seemed to say, 'If you wish to sit here for ever, I won't turn you out.' With a dreadful effort I managed to get up, but was unable to bow, and as I went out, accompanied by pitying looks from mother and daughter, I knocked against a chair that had not been at all in my way, and did this because my whole attention was absorbed in an effort not to stumble over the rug under my feet. In the fresh air however, having shaken myself and groaned so loudly that Kuzmá more than once asked what I wanted, this feeling passed and I began to ponder calmly enough on my love for Sónya, and on her relations with her mother, which seemed to me

<sup>1</sup> Man of business.

strange. When I afterwards told my father that I had noticed that Madame Valákhina and her daughter were not on good terms, he said:

'Yes, she torments the poor girl by her terrible stinginess, and it is strange,' he added, with more feeling than her being one's relation could account for: 'what a charming, sweet, wonderful woman she used to be! I can't understand why she has changed so. You did not meet some kind of a secretary there? What a queer thing it is for a Russian lady to have a secretary!' he said angrily, walking away from me.

'I saw him,' I replied.

'Well, is he at least good-looking?'

'No, not at all.'

'Incomprehensible!' said papa angrily, jerking his shoulder and coughing . . .

'So now I too am in love!' thought I, as I drove on in my drozhki.

## XIX

### THE KORNAKÓVS

My second nearest visit was to the Kornakóvs. They lived in the first-floor flat of a large house on the Arbát Street. The staircase was extremely fine and well-kept, but not luxurious. The drugget was held down by very brightly polished brass rods, but there were no plants or mirrors about. The ballroom, over the brilliantly polished parquet of which I passed directly to the drawing-room, was also coldly severe and neatly arranged; everything shone and seemed solid though not very new, but there were no pictures, curtain ornaments, to be seen anywhere. Several of the princesses were in the drawing-room, and they sat in so correct and idle attitudes that it was quite evident that they did not sit so when there were no visitors.

'Mama will be here directly,' said the eldest,



herself a little closer to me. For a quarter of an hour this princess entertained me, speaking so easily and skillfully that the conversation never flagged for an instant: but it was too evident that she was entertaining me and so I did not like her. Among other things she told me that her brother Stephen (whom they called 'Etienne') and who had been sent to the Cadets' School two years ago, had already become an officer. When she spoke about her brother, especially about his having joined the Hussars against their mother's wish, she put on a frightened expression, and all the younger princesses, who were sitting silent, did the same. When she spoke of my grandmother's death, she put on a sad look and so did all the younger princesses; but when she recalled how I had struck St. Jérôme and had been led out of the room, she laughed and showed her bad teeth, and all the others laughed and showed their bad teeth.

The old princess entered—the same small wizened woman with restless eyes and a habit of looking at others while speaking to you. She took my hand and raised hers to my lips for me to kiss, which I certainly should not have done of myself as I did not consider it necessary.

'How glad I am to see you!' she said with her usual volubility, looking round at her daughters. 'Oh, how he resembles his mama! Doesn't he, Lise?'

Lise said it was true, though I know for certain that I was not in the least like my mother.

'So then you are already grown up! And my Etienne, you remember him? . . . why, he is your second cousin—no, not second but . . . what is it, Lise? My mother was Varvára Dmitrievna, the daughter of Dmitri Nikoláevich, and your grandmother was Natálya Nikoláevna.'

'Then he is a third cousin, mama,' said the eldest princess.

'Oh, you always muddle!' said her mother angrily,

'not third at all, but second once removed—*issues de germains*—that 's what you are to my Etienne. He is already an officer, you know. But it 's not good that he should have so much freedom. You young people should be kept well in hand, and held firmly! . . . You are not cross with your old aunt for telling you the truth? I kept Etienne sternly in hand, and consider that that is necessary.'

'Yes, this is how we are related,' she continued, 'prince Iván Ivánovich is my own uncle, and he was an uncle of your mother's, so your mother and I must have been first cousins? No, second cousins—that 's right! Well, and tell me, my dear, have you been to call on prince Iván?'

I told her that I had not yet been, but was going that same day.

'Ah, how could you!' she exclaimed. 'Your first visit should have been to him. You know that prince Iván is the same as a father to you? He has no children, so you and my children are his only heirs. You should honour him for his age, his position in society, and everything. I know you young people of to-day don't pay much attention to family ties and don't care for old people; but take some notice of what I, your old aunt, say, because I love you and loved your mother, and also loved and respected your grandmother very, very much. No, you must certainly, certainly, go there!'

I replied I should certainly go, and as I thought my visit had lasted long enough, I got up to go, but she detained me.

'No, wait a moment. Lise, where is your father? call him here; he will be so pleased to see you,' she added, turning to me.

Some two minutes later prince Michael entered. He was a thickset man, not tall, very carelessly dressed, unshaven, and with such a stolid expression on his face that it seemed almost stupid. He was not at all

glad to see me; at any rate he did not express his pleasure. But his wife, of whom he seemed much afraid, said to him:

'Doesn't Vóldemar (she had evidently forgotten my name) resemble his mama?' and she made such a sign with her eyes that the prince, probably guessing what she wanted, approached me and with a most indifferent and even dissatisfied expression turned his unshaven cheek to me to be kissed.

'But you are not yet dressed, and must be going!' said the princess to him immediately afterwards, in an angry tone which she evidently was in the habit of using to her family: 'You want to provoke them again, and again to set them against you.'

'Immediately, immediately, my dear!' said Prince Michael, and left the room. I made my bow, and also went out.

It was the first time I had heard that we were Prince Iván's heirs, and the news made an unpleasant impression on me.

## XX

### THE ÍVINS

It had become still more unpleasant to think of the unavoidable visit before me. But before going to the prince, I had first to call on the Ívins on my way. They lived on the Tverskáya Street in an enormous and fine house. Not without timidity did I pass into the front entrance where a door-keeper stood holding a staff.

I inquired whether anybody was at home.

'Whom do you want to see?' 'The general's son is at home,' the door-keeper answered.

'And the general himself?' I asked courageously.

'You must be announced. What shall I say?' said the door-keeper, and rang. The gaitered legs of a

footman appeared on the staircase. Without knowing why, I was so intimidated that I told the footman not to announce me to the general, but that I would first go to see the general's son. As I ascended that broad staircase I felt as if I had become quite small, not in a figurative but in the literal sense of the word. I had had that same feeling as my drozhki drove up to the main entrance: it had seemed to me that the drozhki, the horse, and the coachman, had all grown small. The general's son lay asleep on the sofa, with an open book before him, when I entered the room. His tutor, Frost, who was still with them, followed me into the room with his usual jaunty step and aroused his pupil. Ívin did not evince any particular pleasure at sight of me, and I noticed that he looked at my eyebrows when talking to me. Though he was very polite, it seemed to me that he was entertaining me as the eldest princess had done, and that he did not feel particularly attracted to me nor in any need of my acquaintance since he certainly had a different circle of acquaintances of his own. All this I conjectured chiefly from his gazing at my eyebrows. In short, his attitude towards me, unpleasant as it is to admit it, was almost the same as mine towards Ílinka. I began to feel irritated, watched every one of Ívin's looks, and when his eyes met Frost's I interpreted its meaning to be: 'Whatever has he come here for?'

After talking to me for a while, Ívin told me that his father and mother were at home and asked whether I would not like to go down with him to see them.

'Just a minute, I will get dressed,' he added, going into another room, though he was already well dressed in this one—in a new coat and a white waistcoat. In a few minutes he returned in a uniform all buttoned up, and we went downstairs together. The reception rooms through which we passed were very large, high, and, I think, luxuriously furnished. There was something made of marble and gold, something

wrapped in muslin, and mirrors. Just as we entered a small drawing-room, Ívin's mother came in through another door. She received me in a familiar and friendly manner, made me sit beside her, and questioned me sympathetically about all our family.

I had barely seen her once or twice before, but now I looked at her attentively and liked her very much. She was tall, thin, very pale, and seemed always sad and worn. Her smile was sad but extremely kind, her eyes were large, tired, and squinted a little, which gave her a still sadder and more attractive look. She did not stoop, but sat with her whole body relaxed, and all her movements were drooping. She spoke languidly, but her voice and enunciation, with indistinct r's and l's, were very pleasant. She did not try to entertain me. My answers to her inquiries about my relations evidently aroused her melancholy interest, as if while hearing me she sadly recalled happier times. Her son had gone out somewhere. She looked at me silently for a minute or two and suddenly burst into tears. I sat before her and could not imagine what to say or do. She continued to weep without looking at me. At first I felt sorry for her, then I wondered whether I ought not to try to console her, and how to do it; but finally I became vexed that she should place me in such an awkward situation. 'Can I really be such a pathetic sight?' I thought, 'or is she doing this on purpose to see how I shall behave in such circumstances?'

'It would not do to go away now, as if I were running away from her tears,' I thought. I turned on my chair to remind her at least of my presence.

'Ah, how stupid I am!' she said, looking at me and trying to smile. 'There are days when one cries without any reason.'

She began to feel for the handkerchief that was beside her on the sofa, and suddenly burst into more intense weeping.

'Oh, God! How absurd it is to keep on crying! I loved your mother so, we were such friends . . . we . . . and . . .'

She found her handkerchief, covered her face with it, and continued to cry. My position was again an awkward one and continued to be so for a good while. I felt vexed and yet sorry for her. Her tears seemed sincere, but I thought that she was not crying so much about my mother as because she herself was not happy now, and things had been much better in those days. I do not know how it would have ended, if young Ívin had not returned and said that his father wanted her. She rose and was just going, when Ívin himself came into the room. He was a short sturdy man with thick black eyebrows, closely-cropped and quite grey hair, and a very austere and firm expression of mouth.

I rose and bowed to him, but Ívin, who had three decorations on his green dress-coat, not only did not return my greeting but scarcely looked at me, so that I suddenly felt that I was not a human being but some insignificant thing—a chair or a window, or if human, then such a being as in no way differed from a chair or a window.

'You have not yet written to the countess, my dear,' he said to his wife in French, with an impassive but firm expression of face.

'Good-bye, M. Irtényev,' his wife said to me, suddenly nodding her head haughtily and looking at my eyebrows as her son had done. I bowed again to her and to her husband, and again my bow affected her husband as the opening or shutting of a window might have done. Student Ívin, however, saw me to the door and told me on the way that he was being transferred to the Petersburg University as his father had received an appointment there—mentioning some very important post.

'Well, whatever papa may say,' I muttered to myself as I got into my drozhki, 'I will never set foot

there again; that mope cries when she looks at me as if I were some unfortunate wretch, and that swine Ívin does not acknowledge my bow; but I'll give it him . . .!' How I was going to give it him I certainly did not know, but the remark seemed appropriate.

Often afterwards I had to put up with the injunctions of my father, who said that it was essential to cultivate that acquaintance, and that I could not expect a person in such a position as Ívin's to be attentive to such a youngster as myself; but I held to my resolution for a good while.

## XXI

## PRINCE IVÁN IVÁNOVICH

'Now the last visit, in Nikítskaya Street,' I said to Kuzmá, and we drove to Prince Iván's house.

After surmounting the ordeal of several visits, I had on the whole gained confidence, and was now approaching the prince's house in a fairly tranquil state of mind, when I suddenly remembered Princess Kornakóva's remark that I was an heir of his; I also noticed two carriages at the entrance, and my former timidity returned.

It seemed to me that the old door-keeper who opened the door to me, and the footman who helped me off with my overcoat, and the three ladies and two gentlemen whom I found in the drawing-room, and particularly Prince Iván himself, who in civilian dress sat on the sofa, all regarded me as an heir, and consequently felt ill-disposed towards me. The prince was very affable with me, and kissed me—that is, he touched my cheek for an instant with his soft, dry, and cold lips, asked me about my occupations and plans, joked with me, asked whether I still wrote

verses like those I had written on grandmamma's name-day, and told me to come to dine with him that very day. But the kinder he was the more it seemed to me that he only made much of me in order that it might not be seen how he disliked the idea that I was his heir. He had a habit, caused by the false teeth of which his mouth was full, of raising his upper lip towards his nose after speaking, and emitting a slight sniffing sound as if trying to draw the lip into his nostrils; when he did this, it seemed to me that he was saying to himself: 'Boy, boy, I don't need you to remind me that you're an heir, an heir,' and so on.

When we were children we used to call Prince Iván, 'Grandpapa'; but now, being an heir, my tongue refused to utter that word, and to say 'your excellency'—as one of the gentlemen there did—seemed to me humiliating, so during the whole conversation I tried to avoid addressing him in any way. But it was an old princess who lived in his house and was also one of his heirs, who made me feel most uncomfortable. During the whole dinner-time, when I sat beside her, I imagined that she did not speak to me because she hated me for being, like herself, an heir to the prince; and that the prince paid no attention to our side of the table because we, the princess and I, were both his heirs and therefore distasteful to him.

'Yes, you would not believe how unpleasant it was,' I told Dmítri that same evening, wishing to boast to him of my aversion to the thought of being an heir '(it seemed to me that this was a very fine feeling)'—how unpleasant those two whole hours at the prince's to-day were for me. He is an excellent man and was very affable with me,' I added, wishing to impress on my friend the fact that I was not saying all this because I had been humiliated by the prince—'but,' I continued, 'the idea that they might look on me as they do on the princess who lives in his house and fawns on him, is a terrible thought! He is a wonderful old man,



and exceedingly kind and tactful with everybody, but it is painful to see how he maltreats that princess. That disgusting money spoils every kind of relationship!

'Do you know, I think it would be best to have a straight talk with the prince,' I went on, 'and tell him that I respect him as a man but do not think about the inheritance, and ask him not to leave me anything, and that only on that condition will I visit him.'

Dmítri did not burst out laughing when I said this; on the contrary he kept silent, thought for a while, and then said:

'Do you know, that is not right. Either you should not expect any one to think about you as they think about that princess of yours, or if you really imagine that, you should go farther and imagine that you know what they may think of you, but that such thoughts are so far from you that you despise them and will take no action on such a basis. You should imagine that they imagine that you imagine. . . . In a word,' he added, feeling that his arguments were getting entangled, 'it is much better not to imagine it at all.'

My friend was quite right; but only much later by experience of life, did I become convinced that it is harmful to think, and still more harmful to express, much that seems very noble but ought to lie hidden in the heart of each man, and that noble words seldom go with noble deeds. I am convinced that if a good intention has been uttered, it is difficult, and for the most part impossible, to carry it out. But how refrain from the expression of the noble self-satisfied impulses of youth? Only much later does one remember them and regret them, as one regrets a flower which one could not refrain from plucking before it had opened, and then sees lying on the ground faded and trodden underfoot.

I, who had just spoken to Dmítri, my friend, of how

money spoils human relations, before leaving for the country the very next day, finding that I had squandered all my money on various pictures and Turkish pipes, accepted from him for the journey twenty-five assignation rubles which he offered me, and I long remained in his debt.

## XXII

## A CONFIDENTIAL TALK WITH MY FRIEND

THIS talk took place in the phaeton on the road to Kúntsevo. Dmítri had advised me not to visit his mother in the morning, but had called for me after dinner to take me to spend the whole evening, and even pass the night, at the summer residence where his family were living. Only after we had left the town with its dirty, motley streets—and the intolerable deafening noise of the paved streets had been replaced by a broad view of fields and the soft crunching of our wheels on the dusty road, and the fragrant spring air and broad expanse surrounded me on all sides—did I to some extent recover from the many new impressions and consciousness of freedom which had completely entangled me for the last two days. Dmítri was communicative and gentle, did not jerk his head to adjust his cravat, did not blink nervously or screw up his eyes. I was satisfied with the noble sentiments I had expressed to him, and thought that for their sake he had quite condoned my shameful affair with Kólpikov and did not despise me for it. We talked amicably about many intimate matters one does not usually mention. Dmítri told me about his family, with which I was not yet acquainted, about his mother, aunt, sister, and about her whom Volódya and Dubkóv regarded as his lady-love and called 'the little red-haired one'. Of his mother he spoke

with a kind of cold and solemn eulogy as if to prevent any rejoinder on that subject; his aunt he referred to with rapture but yet with some condescension; of his sister he said very little and seemed ashamed to speak to me about her; but about the 'red-haired one', whose real name was Lyubóv Sergéevna, and who was a middle-aged maiden lady living with the Nekhlyúdovs for family reasons, he spoke enthusiastically.

'Yes, she is a wonderful woman,' he said, blushing shamefacedly but looking all the more boldly into my eyes. 'She is no longer young, perhaps even elderly, and not at all good-looking, but how silly, how absurd, it is to love beauty! . . . I cannot understand it, it is so stupid' (he said this as if he had just discovered a new and extraordinary truth), 'but she has such a soul, such a heart and principles . . . I am convinced you could not find another such maiden in the present-day world.' (I don't know from whom Dmítri borrowed the habit of saying that everything good was rare in the present-day world, but he was fond of repeating this expression and it seemed to suit him.)

'I am only afraid,' he continued quietly, having by his reflection completely annihilated people stupid enough to love beauty—'I'm afraid that you will not understand or learn to know her quickly: she is modest and even reserved, and does not like to show her beautiful, wonderful qualities. Now my mother, who as you will see is a splendid and clever woman, has known Lyubóv Sergéevna for some years but still cannot and will not understand her. Even yesterday—I will tell you why I was in a bad temper when you asked me. The day before yesterday Lyubóv Sergéevna wanted me to go with her to see Iván Yákovlevich. You have no doubt heard about Iván Yákovlevich, who is supposed to be insane but is really a remarkable man. I must tell you Lyubóv Sergéevna

is extremely religious and understands Iván Yákovlevich perfectly. She often goes to converse with him and gives him money for the poor, which she earns herself. She is a wonderful woman, you will see. So I went with her to Iván Yákovlevich and am very grateful to her that I have seen that remarkable man. . . . But mother won't understand it at all, and wants to see only superstition in it. . . . And yesterday mother and I had a rather heated dispute for the first time in my life,' he concluded, with a convulsive movement of the neck as if recalling the feeling he had experienced during that dispute.

'Well, what do you think? I mean how—when do you imagine anything will come of it? . . . or have you talked about the future with her—about how your love or friendship will end?' I asked, wishing to divert his mind from that painful memory.

'You are asking whether I think of marrying her?' he said, blushing again, but turning and resolutely looking me in the face.

'Well, really,' thought I, composing my feelings, 'it's all right; we are two grown-up friends, driving in a phaeton and discussing our future life. Any outsider even would be pleased to hear and see us.'

'Why not?' he went on, after I had answered in the affirmative. 'You see, my aim, like that of every reasonable man, is to be as happy and good as possible; and with her, if only she wishes it when I am quite independent, I shall be happier and better than with the greatest beauty in the world.'

While so conversing we did not notice that we were approaching Kúntsevo, nor that the sky had become overcast and rain was threatening. The sun already stood rather low to the right above the old trees of the Kúntsevo garden, and half of its brilliant red disk was shrouded by a grey slightly translucent cloud, while from the other half broken and fiery rays burst forth and vividly lit up the thick green crowns of the

old trees which shone motionless against the still unclouded and luminous azure of the sky. The glitter and light of that side of the sky presented a sharp contrast to the heavy purple cloud which hung over the young birch copse on the horizon before us.

A little to the right, beyond the trees and shrubs, began to appear the different-coloured roofs of the bungalows, some of which reflected the brilliant sunlight while others assumed the gloomy aspect of the other side of the sky. To the left, lower down, lay a blue and motionless pond surrounded by pale-green willows which were darkly reflected on its opaque and convex-looking surface. On the rising ground beyond the pond spread a dark fallow field, and the straight bright-green streaks which intersected it stretched away into the distance and seemed to reach the threatening, leaden horizon. On either side of the soft road over which our rhythmically-swaying phaeton moved, sappy tufts of rye which here and there was already beginning to form its stalks, shone intensely green. The air was perfectly still and fragrantly fresh. There was no motion in the foliage of the trees or in the rye, and they were extraordinarily clear and bright. Each leaf, each blade of grass, seemed to be living its own full, happy and separate life. Beside the road I noticed a dark footpath winding through the dark-green rye, which had here already reached more than a quarter of its full height, and this footpath vividly reminded me for some reason of the country at home, and by a strange sequence of thought that memory reminded me of Sónya and of my being in love with her.

In spite of all my friendship for Dmítri and the pleasure his frankness gave me, I did not want to know anything more about his feelings and intentions towards Lyubóv Sergéevna, but urgently desired to tell him about my love for Sónya, which seemed to me to be of a much loftier kind. But for some

reason I could not make up my mind to tell him straight out of my anticipations of how good it would be when I, having married Sónya, should live in the country and have little children who would call me 'Papa', and of how glad I should be when he, with Lyubóv Sergéevna his wife, would come in his travelling suit to visit me. Instead of all that, I merely remarked, pointing to the setting sun, 'Look, Dmítri, how lovely!'

Dmítri did not say anything, evidently disappointed that in answer to his confession, which had probably cost him an effort, I drew his attention to nature, towards which he was generally indifferent. Nature affected him quite otherwise than it did me; it affected him not so much by its beauty as by the interest it aroused; he loved it rather with his reason than with his feelings.

'I am very happy,' I then said, without paying attention to the fact that he was apparently occupied with his own thoughts and quite indifferent to what I might say to him: 'You know I told you about a young lady with whom I was in love as a child? Well I saw her to-day,' I went on eagerly, 'and now I am in love with her in earnest . . .'

And in spite of the expression of indifference that remained on his face, I told him about my love and my plans for future married bliss. And strange to say, as soon as I described in detail the strength of my feeling I instantly felt how that feeling began to diminish.

A light rain caught us when we had already turned into the birch avenue leading up to the house, but we did not get wet. I only knew it was raining because a few drops fell on my nose and hand, and something began pattering on the sticky leaves of the birches which hung down their motionless curly twigs as if with pleasure—expressed by the strong odour with which they filled the avenue as they re-

ceived these clear transparent drops. We got out of the phaeton to run quickly through the garden to the house. But at the very entrance we encountered four ladies who—two with needlework, one with a book, another with a lapdog—were rapidly approaching from the other side. Dmítri at once introduced me to his mother, his sister, his aunt, and Lyubóv Sergéevna. They stopped for a second, but the rain began falling faster and faster.

‘Let us go to the gallery; there you will introduce him once more,’ said she whom I took to be Dmítri’s mother, and we ascended the steps together with the ladies.

## XXIII

## THE NEKHLÝÚDOVS

OF the whole group I was at first most struck by Lyubóv Sergéevna, who, in thick knitted slippers and carrying the little spaniel in her arms, ascended the steps behind the rest, stopping once or twice, looking at me very attentively, and then immediately kissing her dog. She was very plain, red-haired, lean, short, and rather misshaped. What rendered her plain face still plainer was the strange way her hair was done with the parting on one side (a fashion of a kind bald women devise for themselves). Much as, for my friend’s sake, I tried to do so, I could not find a single good feature in her. Even her hazel eyes, though they had a kindly expression, were too small and dull, and decidedly not beautiful; even that characteristic feature, her hands, though not large and not badly shaped, were red and rough.

When, following them, I came into the gallery, each of the ladies—except Vára, Dmítri’s sister, who only looked at me attentively with her large dark-grey eyes—said a few words to me before taking up their

work again while Várya began to read aloud from the book which she held in her lap with her finger between the pages.

Princess Márya Ivánovna was a tall graceful woman of about forty. She might have been thought older on account of the grey curls, frankly displayed outside her cap. But her fresh, extremely delicate face, with hardly a wrinkle, and especially the lively, merry radiance of her eyes, made her look much younger. Her eyes were hazel and very wide open, her lips were too thin and rather severe, her nose regular but slightly turned to the left; her hands were large, almost like a man's, with beautiful long fingers, and she wore no rings. She had a high-necked dark-blue dress, tightly fitting her graceful and still youthful figure, which she evidently liked to show off. She sat remarkably straight, sewing some garment. When I entered the gallery she took my hand, drew me to her as if wishing to look at me more closely, and after looking at me with a rather cold, open glance like her son's, she told me that from Dmitri's description she had known me a long time, but that, to become better acquainted she invited me to spend a whole day with them.

'Do whatever you like, don't trouble at all about us, just as we won't trouble about you: walk, read, listen, or sleep, if you find that more amusing,' she added.

Sophia Ivánovna, the princess's sister, was a maiden lady; she was younger than the princess but looked older. She had that peculiar, over-full figure which is only met with in old maids who are short and wear corsets. She looked as if all her robustness had mounted upwards with such force that it threatened to suffocate her at any moment. Her short fat arms could not meet lower than the bent peak of her bodice, and she could no longer see that peak of her tightly-stretched bodice.



Though Princess Márya Ivánovna had black hair and black eyes, and Sophia Ivánovna was fair, with large vivacious and (what is very rare) serene blue eyes, there was a strong family likeness between the sisters: the same expression, the same nose, and the same lips; only Sophia Ivánovna's nose and lips were rather thicker and were slightly drawn to the right when she smiled, whereas her sister's were drawn to the left. Sophia Ivánovna, judging by her dress and the way her hair was done, still tried to look young and would not have shown her grey curls had she had any. At first her look and her treatment of me seemed very haughty, and confused me, whereas with the princess I felt quite at ease. Perhaps her stoutness and a certain resemblance to the portrait of Catherine the Great, which struck me, gave her that haughty mien in my eyes: at any rate I was quite abashed when, looking at me intently, she said: 'The friends of our friends are our friends.' I only recovered and suddenly changed my opinion of her, when after having said those words she became silent, opened her mouth, and heaved a deep sigh. Probably her corpulence occasioned her habit of sighing deeply with her mouth a little open and slightly rolling up her large blue eyes after uttering a few words. Such sweet kindliness was somehow expressed in this habit, that after that sigh I lost all fear of her and even liked her very much. Her eyes were charming, her voice melodious and pleasant, and even the extreme rotundity of her figure did not seem to me, at that period of my youth, bereft of beauty.

As the friend of my friend, Lyubóv Sergéevna ought at once, I considered, to have said something very friendly and intimate to me, and she did look at me for some time in silence as if undecided whether what she intended to say to me would not be too familiar; but she broke the silence only to ask me in what Faculty I was. Then she again looked at me intently

for a good while, apparently hesitating whether to say those intimately friendly words to me or not, and I, noticing this hesitation, entreated her with my eyes to say everything to me, but she only remarked: 'They say that nowadays not many men study science at the university,' and then called to her dog, Suzette.

All that evening Lyubóv Sergéevna made remarks of that kind, which generally had no connexion with what was going on or with one another; but I had such confidence in Dmítri, and he looked so anxiously now at me and now at her all the evening, with an expression that asked: 'Well, what do you think?' that I, as often happens, though at heart convinced that there was nothing remarkable about Lyubóv Sergéevna, was still very far from formulating that thought even to myself.

Finally Várya, the last person of that family, was a very plump girl of about sixteen.

The only good-looking things about her were her large dark-grey eyes, combining merriment and quiet attentiveness and exceedingly like those of her aunt, her very thick plait of brown hair, and her extremely delicate and beautiful hands.

'I expect you find it dull to listen to something out of the middle of a book, M. Nicholas,' Sophia Ivánovna said to me with her kindly sigh, as she turned over the pieces of a dress she was making. The reading had stopped just then because Dmítri had gone out of the room. 'Or perhaps you have read *Rob Roy* before?'

At that time, if only on account of the student's uniform I wore, I considered it a duty when speaking to people I did not know well, to answer the simplest of questions in a clever and original manner, and I considered simple answers such as 'Yes', 'No', 'Dull', 'Amusing', and the like, to be exceedingly disgraceful. With a glance at my new fashionable trousers and the bright buttons of my coat, I answered that I had not

read *Rob Roy* but was much interested to hear it, because I preferred to read books from the middle rather than from the beginning.

'It is twice as interesting. One guesses what has been, and what will be,' I added with a self-satisfied smile.

The princess laughed in a way that seemed to me unnatural. (I noticed later on that she never laughed in any other way.)

'Well, I expect that 's true,' she said. 'And will you stay long in Moscow, Nicholas? You will not be offended at my not calling you *Monsieur*? When will you be leaving?'

'I don't know, perhaps to-morrow and perhaps we may be staying some time,' I answered for some reason, though I knew we should certainly have to start next day.

'I should like you to stay,' Princess Márya Ivánovna said, looking somewhere into the distance, 'both for your own sake and for Dmítri's. At your age friendship is a splendid thing.'

I felt that everybody was looking at me and waiting to hear what I should say, though Vára pretended to be examining her aunt's work; I felt that I was being put through a sort of examination, and that I must show myself to the best advantage.

'Yes, for me,' I said, 'Dmítri's friendship is useful, but I cannot be useful to him: he is a thousand times better than I.' (Dmítri could not hear me or I should have been afraid of his feeling the insincerity of my words.)

The princess again laughed the unnatural laugh that was natural to her. 'Well, but to hear him talk!' she said—'*c'est vous qui êtes un petit monstre de perfection.*'<sup>1</sup>

'*Monstre de perfection*—that 's splendid, I must remember that,' I thought.

<sup>1</sup> It is you who are a little monster of perfection.

'However, apart from you he is a master at it,' she continued lowering her voice (which was very pleasant to me) and indicating Lyubóv Sergéevna with her eyes—'He has discovered in *poor auntie* (that was what they called Lyubóv Sergéevna), whom I have known these twenty years with her Suzette, such perfections as I have never suspected. Várya, tell them to bring me a glass of water,' she added, again gazing into the distance, probably considering that it was too soon or quite unnecessary to initiate me into their family relations. 'No, he had better go—he is not doing anything—and you go on reading. Go, my dear, straight through that door, and when you have gone fifteen paces, stop and say in a loud voice, "Peter, bring Márya Ivánovna a glass of iced water"' said she to me, and again laughed in her unnatural way.

'No doubt she wants to speak about me,' I thought as I left the room. 'I expect she wants to say that she has noticed that I am a very, very intelligent young man.' I had not gone fifteen paces before the stout Sophia Ivánovna, puffing, but walking with light rapid steps, overtook me.

'*Merci, mon cher,*'<sup>1</sup> she said. 'I am going there myself, so I will order it.'

## XXIV

### LOVE

SOPHIA IVÁNOVNA, as I found out later, was one of those exceptional middle-aged women who were born for family life but to whom fate has denied that happiness, and who in consequence of that denial suddenly decide to expend on some chosen people the long pent-up store of love intended for children and husband which has grown and strengthened in their

<sup>1</sup> Thank you, my dear.

heart. And in old maids of this kind that store is sometimes so inexhaustible that though there may be many chosen ones, there is still much love left over which they expend on all around them—good and bad—whom they happen to meet in their lives.

There are three kinds of love:

- (1) Beautiful love,
- (2) Self-denying love, and
- (3) Active love.

I am not speaking of the love of a young man for a young woman and vice versa. On the contrary I am afraid of such billing and cooing. I have been so unfortunate in life as never to have seen a spark of truth in that kind of love, only falsity, in which sensuality, marital relations, money, a wish to bind or to free one's hands, has so entangled the feeling itself that it has been impossible to make anything out. I am speaking of the love of man, which according to its greater or lesser spiritual strength is concentrated on one, on a few, or is poured out on many, persons—love for a mother, father, brother, child, comrade, friend, or fellow-countryman,—the love of man.

*Beautiful love* is love for the beauty of the sentiment itself and its expression. For people who love in that way, the loved object is dear only in so far as it evokes the agreeable sentiment, the consciousness and expression of which they enjoy. People who enjoy *beautiful love* care very little for reciprocity; it being a circumstance that has no effect on the beauty and pleasure of their sentiment. They often change the object of their love, as their main aim is only that the pleasant feeling of loving should be continually excited. In order to maintain this pleasant sensation in themselves, they continually talk in the choicest terms of their love, both to the object of it and to everybody else, even to those whom it does not at all concern. In our country, people of a certain class who love *beautifully*, not only tell everybody of their love, but always tell of

it in French. It seems absurd and strange to say so, but I feel certain that there have been, and still are, many people in a certain class of society, particularly among women, whose love for their friends, husbands, and children, would vanish at once were they forbidden to talk about it in French.

The second kind of love—*self-denying love*—is love of the process of sacrificing oneself for the beloved object regardless of whether such sacrifice benefits or harms the loved one. 'There is no unpleasantness I would not undergo to prove my devotion to *him*, or *her*, before the whole world,' is the formula for this kind of love. People who love in this way never believe in reciprocity (for there is even greater merit in sacrificing myself for one who does not understand me), they are always sickly, which again enhances the merit of their sacrifice; they are generally constant, for it would be hard for them to lose the merit of the sacrifices they have made for their beloved; they are always ready to die to convince *him* or *her* of their devotion, but they neglect small everyday proofs of love, which do not demand special self-sacrifice. It is a matter of indifference to them whether you have had good food, have slept well, or whether you are enjoying yourself and are well, and they do nothing to procure you these comforts if it is in their power to do so; but they would face a bullet, go through fire and water, and waste away for love—they are always ready for that—if only opportunity offered itself. Besides this, those inclined to self-sacrificing love are always haughty in their love, exacting, jealous, suspicious, and, oddly enough, desire dangers for their adored that they may save them from misfortunes or comfort them, and even welcome viccs, in order to reform them.

You are living in the country alone with your wife, who loves you with self-sacrificing love. You are well and tranquil, you have occupations you enjoy—your

loving wife is so delicate that she cannot attend to the housekeeping, which is left to the servants, nor to the children, who are in the hands of nurses, nor even to any hobby, for she cares for nothing but you. She *seems* ill, but not wishing to grieve you does not wish to mention it to you; she *seems* bored, but for your sake is ready to endure boredom all her life long; it *seems* that your great absorption in your business, whatever it may be—sport, books, farming, or official work—is killing her: she sees that these pursuits will be your undoing, but she is silent and suffers. But then you fall ill—and your loving wife forgets her own ill-health and though you entreat her not to torment herself needlessly, never leaves your bedside; and you feel her pitying eyes on you every second, as if saying: ‘Well, I told you so, but for all that I will not leave you.’ In the morning you feel a little better and go into another room. The room is neither heated nor arranged; the soup, which is all you are allowed to eat, has not been ordered, nor has your medicine been sent for; but your loving wife, worn out by her night’s vigils, still gazes at you with the same look of commiseration, walks on tiptoe, and gives whispered, indistinct and unaccustomed orders to the servants. You want to read—your loving wife tells you, with a sigh, that she knows you will not listen to her and will be vexed with her—she is used to that—but that it would be better for you not to read; you wish to walk about in the room—you had better not do that either; you want to talk to a friend who has come to see you—but it is better for you not to talk. In the night you are again feverish and want to forget yourself, but your loving wife, thin and pale, occasionally sighing, sits in an armchair beside you in the dim glimmer of the night-light and by her slightest movement or sound arouses in you feelings of irritation and impatience. You have a servant who has been with you for twenty

years, to whom you are accustomed and who serves you gladly and efficiently, as he has had enough sleep during the day and is paid for his services, but she won't let him wait on you. She does everything herself with her own weak, unaccustomed fingers, and you cannot watch without restrained irritation how those white fingers vainly endeavour to open a medicine bottle, extinguish a candle, spill the medicine, or touch you squeamishly. If you are an impatient irascible man and ask her to go away, your irritated overwrought ears hear her submissively sighing and crying behind the door and whispering some nonsense to your servant. At length, if you have not died, your loving wife—who has not slept for twenty nights during your illness, as she continually reminds you—falls ill, droops, suffers, and becomes even less capable of doing anything, and when you are in a normal state expresses her love of self-sacrifice only by a meek dullness, which is involuntarily communicated to you and to every one about her.

The third kind—*active love*—consists in a longing to satisfy all the needs, wishes, caprices, and even vices of the beloved one. People who love like that always love for a lifetime, for the longer they love the better they get to know the loved one and the easier it becomes to love, that is, to satisfy the beloved one's wishes. Their love rarely expresses itself in words and, when expressed, this is not done in a self-satisfied and beautiful but in a timid and awkward way, for they are always afraid they do not love sufficiently. Such people love even the faults of the loved one, for those faults furnish them with opportunities to satisfy fresh desires. They seek for reciprocity, believe in it, even readily deceiving themselves, and are happy when they obtain it; but if they fail to obtain it they still go on loving in the same way, and not only desire the loved one's happiness, but



always try to promote it by all moral and material means, great and small, in their power.

It was this kind of active love for her nephew, her niece, her sister, for Lyubóv Sergéevna, and even for me—since Dmítri cared for me—which shone in the eyes and in every word and movement of Sophia Ivánovna.

Only much later did I fully appreciate Sophia Ivánovna, but even at this time the question occurred to me: why did Dmítri, who tried to understand love in a way quite different from other young people, and who had dear, loving Sophia Ivánovna always before his eyes, suddenly fall passionately in love with the incomprehensible Lyubóv Sergéevna, and merely acknowledge that his aunt, too, had good qualities? Evidently the saying, 'No man is a prophet in his own country' is just. And this for one of two reasons: either there really is more bad than good in every man, or man must be more susceptible to the bad than to the good. Dmítri had known Lyubóv Sergéevna only a short time, but had had experience of his aunt's affection since his birth.

## XXV

### I GET ACQUAINTED

WHEN I returned to the gallery they were not talking about me at all, as I had anticipated, and Vára was not reading but having laid her book aside was disputing warmly with Dmítri, who, walking up and down, was adjusting his cravat with his neck and blinking his eyes. The ostensible subject of their dispute was Iván Yákovlevich and superstition; but the dispute was too heated for its underlying meaning not to be something that concerned the whole family more closely. The princess and Lyubóv Sergéevna sat silently listening to every word, evidently wishing

sometimes to take part in the discussion, but refraining and allowing the others to speak for them—Várya for the one, and Dmítri for the other. When I entered, Várya glanced at me with an expression of such indifference that it was evident that the dispute so absorbed her that she did not care whether I heard what she said or not. The same was expressed by the looks of the princess, who was evidently on Várya's side. But Dmítri in my presence spoke even more passionately and Lyubóv Sergéevna seemed much alarmed by my entrance and said, without addressing any one in particular: 'The old people say rightly, *si jeunesse savait, si vieillesse pouvait*.'<sup>1</sup>

This statement, however, did not stop the dispute, but only made me think that the side Lyubóv Sergéevna and my friend were on, was the wrong one. Though I felt rather awkward at being present at a small family disagreement, it was pleasant to see the real relations of this household among themselves, which came out in the discussion, and to feel that my presence did not hinder their speaking their minds.

How often it happens that you see a family under one and the same veil of false decorum for years, and the real relations of its members remain hidden from you. I have even noticed that the more impenetrable and therefore more beautiful that veil is, the coarser are the actual relations it hides from you. But when, quite unexpectedly, in that family circle an apparently quite unimportant question happens to be raised—about a bit of lace, a visit, or the husband's horses, and without any apparent reason the discussion becomes more and more embittered, there is no longer sufficient room under the veil for the examination of the question, and suddenly, to the horror of the disputants themselves and the astonishment of those present, all the real coarseness of their relations with one another comes to the front, and

<sup>1</sup> If youth but knew, if age but could.

the veil, no longer hiding anything, sways idly between the contending parties and only reminds you of the fact that you had been so long deceived. It is often less painful to strike your head full tilt against the door than to touch a bruised and aching spot ever so lightly; and almost every family has a bruised spot of this kind. In the Nekhlyúdov family, Dmítri's strange love for Lyubóv Sergéevna was such a bruised spot and aroused in his sister and mother, if not a feeling of jealousy, at least one of offended family feeling. That was why the dispute about Iván Yákovlevich and superstition had such a serious meaning for them all.

'In what others laugh at and everybody despises,' said Vára in her melodious voice, pronouncing every letter clearly, 'just in that, you try to see something particularly good.'

'In the first place only a frivolous person can speak of despising such a remarkable man as Iván Yákovlevich,' Dmítri replied, convulsively jerking his head in a direction away from his sister, 'and secondly, you on the contrary deliberately try not to see the good that stands before your eyes.'

When Sophia Ivánovna returned to us, she glanced several times now at her nephew, now at her niece and then at me, with a frightened look, and once or twice opened her mouth and sighed deeply, as if she had herself said something.

'Vára, please be quick and read,' she said, handing her the book and affectionately patting her hand. 'I must know whether he found her again. (I don't think there was in the novel any mention of any one finding anybody.) And you, Dmitri, had better wrap up your cheek, my dear, for it is getting cool and your teeth will start aching again,' she said to her nephew, in spite of the discontented look he gave her, presumably for having broken the logical thread of his argument. The reading was resumed.

This little quarrel did not at all affect the family tranquillity or the reasonable concord which surrounded that little circle of women.

That circle, the direction and tone of which was evidently set by Princess Márya Ivánovna, had for me the entirely new and attractive character of a certain reasonableness, together with simplicity and refinement. I saw this character in the beauty, cleanliness and solidity of things—such as a bell, the binding of a book, an easy chair, a table, and in the princess's erect pose supported by a corset; in the way her grey curls were displayed, and in the way she called me simply Nicholas, and *he*, the first time she saw me; also in their occupations, their reading and sewing, and in the unusual whiteness of the ladies' hands. (Their hands all showed a peculiar family trait, the pink palms being sharply divided in a straight line from the unusually white backs.) But most of all that character was expressed in the excellent way all three spoke both Russian and French, pronouncing every letter distinctly and finishing every word and sentence with pedantic accuracy. All this and especially the fact that in their company I was treated simply and seriously like a grown man—they telling me their opinions and listening to mine—to which I was so little accustomed that in spite of my bright buttons and blue cuffs I was constantly afraid of being suddenly told: 'Do you really suppose you are being talked to seriously? Go to your lessons!'—resulted in my not feeling at all embarrassed in their company. I got up, changed from place to place, and spoke freely with everybody except Várya, with whom it seemed to me that it would, for some reason, be improper or not permissible for me to speak at this first meeting.

Listening to her pleasant melodious voice while she read, looking now at her, now at the sandy path in the flower-garden on which round dark dots were

formed by the rain, and at the lime trees on whose leaves rare drops of rain still fell from the thin edge of the cloud that had overtaken us and through which the blue sky was now visible, and then at the last purple beams of the setting sun which lit up the thick old birch trees wet with the rain, and then once more at Vára, I thought that she was not at all bad looking, as she had seemed to me at first.

'It is a pity that I am already in love,' I thought, 'and that Vára is not Sónya! How good it would be suddenly to become a member of this family: I should at once have a mother, an aunt, and a wife!' While I was thinking this, I gazed intently at Vára and imagined that I was hypnotizing her and that she would have to look up at me. She raised her head from her book, looked at me, and having met my eyes turned away.

'But it's still raining,' she said.

And suddenly I experienced a strange feeling: I seemed to remember that all that was now happening to me was a repetition of what had happened before—that fine rain had then been falling in the same way, and the sun had been setting behind the birch trees, and I had looked at *her*, and she had been reading, and I had hypnotized her and she had looked round, and even that I had then remembered that this had happened before.

'Can this be *she*?' I thought. 'Is it really *beginning*?' But I soon decided that she was not *she*, and that it was not yet beginning. 'In the first place she is not good looking,' I thought, 'and she is just a young lady whose acquaintance I have made in the most ordinary manner, but *she* will be extraordinary, and I shall meet her in some extraordinary place; and then, I only like this family so much because I have not seen anything yet,' I reflected, 'and there must no doubt be such people everywhere, of whom I shall meet very many in my life.'

## XXVI

I SHOW MYSELF TO THE BEST  
ADVANTAGE

AT tea time the reading stopped and the ladies began talking among themselves about people and circumstances I was not acquainted with, only, as I imagined, to let me feel, in spite of the friendly welcome I had received from them, the difference in age and social position between them and myself. But when the conversation became general and I could take part in it, to redeem my previous silence I tried to show my exceptional intelligence and originality, which because of my uniform, I considered myself particularly bound to do. When the conversation turned to summer residences, I suddenly remarked that Prince Iván had a summer residence near Moscow that people came from London and Paris to see; that it had a railing which had cost three hundred and eighty thousand rubles; that Prince Iván was a near relative of mine and I had dined with him that day, and he had specially asked me to spend the whole summer with him in that country house, but that I had refused because I knew the house very well, having been there several times and that all those railings and bridges did not interest me in the least, because I could not bear luxury, particularly in the country, but liked the country to be quite country-like. Having told this awful and complex falsehood I grew confused and blushed, so that everybody must have noticed that I was lying. Várya who was just handing me a cup of tea and Sophia Ivánovna, who had been looking at me while I spoke, both turned away and conversed about other things with an expression I often encountered subsequently on the faces of kind people, when a very young man began

to tell obvious lies to their faces, and which implies: 'We know he is lying, but why is the poor fellow doing it?' . . .

The reason I spoke about Prince Iván's summer residence was because I could find no better pretext for mentioning my relationship with him and the fact that I had dined with him that day: but why I spoke about the railing that cost three hundred and eighty thousand rubles, and about having often visited him there, when I had not been there once nor could have been (for Prince Iván, as the Nekhlyúdovs very well knew, never lived anywhere but in Moscow or Naples) I cannot at all imagine. Neither in my childhood nor in my boyhood nor later in my riper years have I detected in myself the vice of falsehood: on the contrary I was more inclined to be too truthful and frank, but at this first period of my adolescence I was often seized by a strange desire to tell the most desperate lies for no apparent reason. I say *desperate* advisedly, for I lied about matters on which I could very easily be caught out. I think that an ambitious desire to appear quite a different man from what I was, united with the unrealizable hope of lying without being detected, were the chief causes of this strange inclination.

After tea, the rain having stopped and the evening, when twilight fell, being calm and bright, the princess proposed going for a stroll to the bottom of the garden to see her favourite spot there. Acting on my principle of always being original, and thinking that clever people such as the princess and myself should be above commonplace politeness, I answered that I could not bear walking about aimlessly, or even if I did, I preferred to go quite alone. I did not at all realize that this was simply rude, for it then seemed to me that as there is nothing more shameful than empty compliments so there is nothing more charming and original than a certain impolite frankness.

However, pleased as I was with my answer, I went out with the rest of the company all the same.

The princess's favourite spot was a little bridge across a narrow marsh in a thicket at the very bottom of the garden. The view was very restricted but very dreamy and graceful. We are so accustomed to confuse art with nature, that natural phenomena which we have never met with in paintings frequently seem to us artificial, as if nature herself were unnatural; and vice versa, those phenomena which have too often been met with in paintings seem to us hackneyed, while some views which are too much permeated by one thought and feeling, when encountered in nature seem affected. The view from the princess's favourite spot was of that kind. It consisted of a small pond overgrown along its edges, with a steep hill rising just behind it covered with enormous old trees and bushes, which often mingled their differently coloured foliage, and an old birch-tree that leaned over the pond at the bottom of the hill—its roots partly in the moist bank of the pond, its crown resting against a tall graceful aspen and hanging its curling branches over the smooth surface of the pond which reflected those drooping branches as well as the surrounding verdure.

'How lovely!' said the princess, shaking her head and not addressing any one in particular.

'Yes, wonderful, but it seems to me very like painted scenery,' I said, wishing to show that I had my own opinions about everything.

As though not hearing my remark, the princess continued to admire the view and turning to her sister and to Lyubóv Sergéevna, pointed out some details to them—the twisted overhanging branch with its reflection—which particularly pleased her. Sophia Ivánovna said that it was all beautiful and that her sister spent hours at a time there, but it was evident that she said this to please the princess. I have noticed



that people endowed with capacity to love are seldom responsive to the beauties of nature. Lyubón Ser-géevna was also in raptures, asking among other things, 'By what is that birch supported? Will it stand much longer?' and kept looking at her Suzette which, wagging its bushy tail, ran about the bridge on its crooked little legs with such a worried look as if this were the first time in its life it had found itself outside a room. Dmítri began a very logical argument with his mother about it being impossible for any view with a limited horizon to be beautiful. Vára did not speak. When I looked round at her, she was standing with her profile to me, leaning on the railing of the bridge and looking before her. Something, certainly, absorbed and even touched her greatly, for she seemed wrapped in thought and quite unconscious of herself or of being looked at. In the expression of her large eyes there was so much concentrated attention and calm clear thought, and such freedom and even dignity in her pose, though she was not tall, that I was again struck by something like a memory of her and again asked myself, 'Is it not beginning?' And again I told myself that I was already in love with Sónya, and that Vára was merely a young lady, my friend's sister. But at that moment she pleased me, and consequently I felt an insuperable desire to do or say something rather unpleasant to her.

'Do you know, Dmítri,' I said to my friend, drawing nearer to Vára so that she should hear what I was saying, 'I think that even without these mosquitoes, there would be nothing nice about this place, but that now'—and I struck my forehead and really crushed a mosquito—'it is quite unpleasant.'

'You don't seem to be fond of nature?' said Vára to me without turning her head.

'I consider it an idle and useless occupation,' I replied, pleased that I had managed to say something rather unpleasant to her and at the same time some-

thing original. Vára for an instant slightly raised her eyebrows with a look of pity, and then went on calmly gazing straight before her.

I felt vexed with her, but for all that the grey hand-rail of the bridge on which she was leaning, with its faded paint, the reflection in the dark pond of the overhanging branch of the birch-tree which seemed to wish to join the drooping boughs, the smell of the marsh, the feeling of the crushed mosquito on my forehead, Vára's attentive look and dignified attitude, often afterwards arose unexpectedly in my imagination.

## XXVII

### DMÍTRI

WHEN we returned from our stroll, Vára did not wish to sing as she usually did in the evenings, and I was so self-complacent as to attribute this to myself, imagining it to be caused by what I had said on the bridge. The Nekhlyúdovs did not take supper and retired early, but that evening, since as Sophia Ivánovna had predicted, Dmítri's teeth really began to ache, we went to his room even earlier than usual. Supposing myself to have done all that my blue collar and my buttons demanded, and thinking that everybody was highly pleased with me, I was in a very agreeable and self-satisfied state of mind. Dmítri on the contrary, owing to the dispute and to his tooth-ache, was taciturn and gloomy. He sat down at the table, took out his note-books, a diary, and the book in which he was in the habit each evening of making notes about his past and future occupations—and, continually blinking and touching his cheek with his hand, wrote for a considerable time.

'Oh, do leave me alone!' he shouted to the maid who had been sent by Sophia Ivánovna to ask how

his toothache was and whether he would not have a poultice. After that, saying that my bed would be made at once and that he would be back soon, he went to Lyubóv Sergéevna.

‘What a pity Vára is not pretty—and in general that she is not Sónya!’ I reflected while left alone in the room. ‘How nice it would be after finishing the university to come here and propose to her. I would say: “Princess, I am no longer young; I cannot love passionately, but will always love you like a dear sister.” “You, I already esteem,” I would say to her mother, “and you, Sophia Ivánovna, believe me, I esteem very highly.” “Tell me then simply and frankly, will you be my wife?” “Yes.” And she would give me her hand, and I would press it and say: “My love is not in words but in deeds”. . . . But then,’ I suddenly thought, ‘supposing Dmítri should fall in love with Lyúba—for after all Lyúba is in love with him—and should wish to marry her? One or other of us would then not be allowed to marry,<sup>1</sup> and that would be excellent. This is what I would do. I should notice it at once, but not say anything. Then I should go to Dmítri and say: “It would be vain for us to conceal anything from one another, dear friend. You know that my love for your sister will end only with my life; but I know all—you have deprived me of my highest hope, you have rendered me unhappy; but do you know how Nicholas Irtényev requites his lifelong unhappiness? . . . Here, take my sister!” and I would hold out Lyúba’s hand to him. He would say, “Not on any account!” And I should say, “Prince Nekhlyúdov! It is useless for you to try to be more magnanimous than Nicholas Irtényev. There is not in the world a man more magnanimous than he.” Then I would bow and go away. Dmítri and Lyúba would run out after me in tears and entreat

<sup>1</sup> Marriages between brother-and sister-in-law were illegal in Russia.

me to accept their sacrifice. And I might consent and be very happy, if only I were in love with Vára. . . .'

These fancies were so pleasant that I much wished to communicate them to my friend, but in spite of our vow of mutual confidence I felt it to be physically impossible to do so.

Dmítri returned from Lyubóv Sergéevna with some drops she had given him applied to his teeth, but in still greater pain and consequently still more gloomy. No bed had yet been made up for me, and a boy, Dmítri's servant, came to ask him where I was to sleep.

'Go to the devil!' exclaimed Dmítri, stamping his foot. 'Váska! Váska! Váska!' he shouted as soon as the boy had gone away, raising his voice more and more. 'Váska, make up a bed for me on the floor.'

'No, I had better sleep on the floor,' I said.

'Well, never mind, make it anywhere!' Dmítri went on in the same angry tone. 'Váska, why don't you make it?'

But Váska evidently did not understand what was wanted of him, and did not move.

'Well, what are you about? Make it! Make it! Váska! Váska!' shouted Dmítri, suddenly getting into a rage.

But Váska, who was frightened and still did not understand, remained immovable.

'Have you sworn to be the death of me—to drive me mad.'

And Dmítri, jumping up from his chair and running up to the boy, struck him several times with all his might on the head with his fist, and Váska rushed headlong from the room. Dmítri stopped at the door, looked round at me, and the expression of rage and cruelty that for a moment had appeared on his face changed into such a meek, shamefaced, childlike, and affectionate expression, that, much as I wanted to turn away, I felt sorry for him and could not do so.

He did not say anything but for a long time paced the room silently, occasionally glancing at me with the same look, that seemed to ask forgiveness, then took one of his note-books from the table drawer, wrote something in it, took off his coat and folded it carefully, went to the corner where an icon hung, folded his large white hands on his breast, and began to pray. He prayed so long that Váska had time to bring in a mattress and make up a bed on the floor, as I whispered to him to do. I undressed and lay down on the bed on the floor, but Dmítri still went on praying. As I looked at his slightly stooping shoulders and at the soles of his feet, which seemed to expose themselves to me in a kind of submissive way every time he bowed to the ground, I loved him even more than before and kept wondering whether I ought to tell him what I had been dreaming about our sisters. When he had finished praying, Dmítri lay down on the mattress beside me and, leaning on his arm, for a long while looked at me affectionately and shamefacedly in silence. This was evidently painful to him, but he seemed to be punishing himself. I smiled as I looked at him. He smiled, too.

'Why don't you tell me,' he asked, 'that I have behaved badly? You know you were thinking so just now.'

'Yes,' I replied—for though I had been thinking about something else it seemed to me that I had really thought that. 'Yes, it was very bad and I did not expect it of you,' said I, particularly pleased to be talking familiarly with him. 'Well, and how is your toothache?' I added.

'Gone! Ah, Nicholas, my friend!' Dmítri began, so affectionately that his shining eyes seemed to be filled with tears, 'I know and feel how bad I am, and God sees how I long to be—and entreat Him to make me—better; but what am I to do if I have such an unfortunate, disgusting character? What am I to do?

I try to restrain and reform myself, but you know that can't be done at once and can't be done alone. I must have some one to help me and support me. Now Lyubóv Sergéevna understands me and helps me much in this matter. I can see by my notes that I have improved a good deal during this last year. Oh, Nicholas, my dear soul!' he continued with a peculiar and unusual tenderness and in a calmer tone, after that confession, 'how much the influence of such a woman means! Oh God, how good it may be with a woman like her, when once I am independent! With her I am quite a different man.'

After that, Dmítri began to unfold to me his plans of marriage, life in the country, and continuous efforts for self-improvement.

'I shall live in the country, you will come to see me, and you will perhaps be married to Sónya,' he said. 'Our children will play together. All this seems funny and silly, but it may happen.'

'I should think so, and very easily!' I said, smiling and at the same time thinking that it would be still better were I to marry his sister.

'Do you know what?' he said after a short pause, 'you only imagine that you are in love with Sónya, but I see it's all nonsense. You don't yet know what the real feeling is like.'

I did not reply, because I almost agreed with him. We were silent for a while.

'You noticed that I was in a bad temper again to-day and had a horrid dispute with Vára? I felt very uncomfortable afterwards, especially as it happened in your presence. Though she does not think rightly about many things, she is a splendid girl, a very good girl . . . as you'll see when you know her better.'

His change from talk of my not being in love, to praise of his sister, greatly delighted me and made me blush, but still I said nothing to him about his sister and we went on speaking of other matters.

So we chatted till the cocks crew a second time and the pale dawn already peeped in at the window, when Dmítri went over to his own bed and put out the light.

'Now we'll sleep,' he said.

'Yes,' I answered, 'but just one word . . .'

'Well?'

'It's fine to be alive!' said I.

'It's fine to be alive!' he replied in such a tone that I seemed to see in the dark the expression of his bright, caressing eyes and childlike smile.

## XXVIII

### IN THE COUNTRY

THE next day Volódya and I set out with post-horses for the country. On the way, going over various Moscow reminiscences, I remembered Sónya Valákhina, but this only towards evening when we had already gone five stages. 'It is strange,' thought I, 'that I am in love and quite forgot to think of it; I must think about her.' And I began thinking of her as one thinks when travelling, not connectedly but vividly; and I thought to such effect that for two days after my arrival in the country I considered it necessary to appear sad and pensive before the household—especially before Kátya whom I regarded as a great expert in such matters and to whom I hinted at the state of my heart. But despite all my efforts to deceive others and myself, and despite the intentional adoption of all the symptoms I had noticed in others who were in love, I only remembered for two days—and that not continuously but chiefly in the evenings—that I was in love, and finally as soon as I entered into the new rut of country life and occupations I quite forgot about my love for Sónya.

We arrived in Petróvskoe in the night, and I was

so fast asleep that I saw neither the house nor the birch avenue. Nor did we see any of the household, who had all gone to bed and had long been fast asleep. Bent-backed old Fóka came carrying a candle, bare-foot, and with his wife's wadded jacket over his shoulders, to open the door. On seeing us he trembled with joy, kissed our shoulders, hurriedly put away the piece of felt on which he had been sleeping, and began to dress himself. I passed through the hall and up the stairs not yet fully awake, but in the anteroom the lock of the door, the latch, a warped floor-board, the settee, the old candlestick—covered with grease as of old, the shadows cast by the crooked flame of the freshly-lit tallow candle, the ever-dusty double panes of the window that was never opened, and beyond which grew, as I remembered, a mountain ash—were all so familiar, so full of memories, so harmonious—as if united by a common idea—that I suddenly seemed to feel that the dear old house was caressing me. Involuntarily the question presented itself to my mind: how we, the house and I, had managed to live so long apart? and I ran hurriedly to see whether the rooms were all still the same. They were just the same, only they had all become smaller and lower and I seemed to have grown taller, heavier, and coarser; but such as I was, the house received me joyfully into its embrace, and every floor-board, every window, each step of the staircase, and every sound, awoke in me a host of images, feelings, and memories of occurrences in the irrecoverable, happy past. We came into our nursery—all the terrors of childhood's days again lurked in the dusk of the corners and doorways; we went into the drawing-room—the same quiet tender mother-love seemed spread over all the objects in the room; we passed through the ball-room—noisy, care-free, childish mirth seemed to reside there still and only waited to be revived. In the sitting-room, where Fóka took us, and where he had made



up beds for us, everything—the looking-glass, the screen, the old wooden icon, each unevenness of the white-papered wall—spoke of suffering and death and of what would never be again.

We went to bed and Foka left us after saying good-night.

‘Why, this is the room in which mama died!’ said Volódya.

I did not reply, and pretended to be asleep. Had I said anything I should have begun to cry. Next morning when I awoke, papa was sitting in his dressing-gown, wearing soft boots, with a cigar in his mouth, on Volódya’s bed, talking and laughing with him. With a merry jerk of his shoulder he jumped up from Volódya’s bed, came to me, slapped me on the back with his large hand, turned his cheek to me and pressed it to my lips.

‘Well, that ’s excellent. Thank you, diplomat!’ he said, with his peculiar, affectionate banter, gazing at me with his small sparkling eyes. ‘Volódya says you passed your exams like a brick; well, that ’s fine. When you make up your mind not to play the fool, you, too, are a fine lad. Thank you, my dear! Now we shall have a good time here, and in winter we may perhaps move to Petersburg. It ’s a pity though that hunting is over, else I’d have given you a treat; but can you hunt with a gun, Vóldemar? There ’s plenty of game, and I may go out with you myself one day. Then in winter, please God, we’ll move to Petersburg and you’ll meet people and make acquaintances. I’ve now got grown-up fellows in you. As I was just saying to Vóldemar, you are now on the road and my work is done, you can go by yourselves, but if you want to consult me, do so. I am no longer your usher but your friend; at any rate I wish to be your friend and comrade and adviser as far as I can, and nothing more. How does that match your philosophy, Nicky, eh? Is it good or bad? Eh?’

Of course I said it was splendid, and I really found it so. Papa seemed particularly attractive, bright, and happy, that day. His new relations with me as with an equal, a comrade, made me love him more than ever.

'Well, tell me, have you been to see all our relations? The Ívins? Did you see the old man? What did he say to you?' he went on questioning me. 'Did you call on Prince Iván?'

We talked so long without dressing that the sun had already begun to move away from the window and Jacob (who seemed just as old, still twiddled his thumbs behind his back, and still said 'on the other hand') came into our room to tell papa that the calash was ready.

'Where are you going?' I asked papa.

'Oh, I almost forgot,' said papa with a jerk of vexation and a slight cough, 'I promised to go and see the Epifánovs to-day. You remember Mademoiselle Epifánova—*la belle Flamande*? . . . She used to come to see your mama. They are excellent people.' And papa, jerking his shoulder, bashfully as it seemed to me, left the room.

While we were talking, Lyúba had come to the door several times and asked whether she might come in, but papa each time had shouted to her through the door, 'On no account, we are not dressed.'

'What does it matter? I've often seen you in your dressing-gown!'

'You cannot see your brothers without their *inexpressibles*,' he called to her, 'but they will both of them rap on the door to you. Is that enough? Go and rap! It is not even proper for them to speak to you in such a dishabille.'

'Oh, what a nuisance you are! Then at least be quick and come to the drawing-room. Mimi is so anxious to see you,' shouted Lyúba through the door.

As soon as papa had gone I dressed quickly in my

student's uniform and went to the drawing-room. Volódya on the contrary did not hurry and stayed upstairs a long time talking to Jacob and asking him where snipe and double-snipe were to be found. As I have already intimated, he feared nothing so much as what he called 'tenderness' with his brother, his father, or his sister, and avoiding every show of sentiment, he went to the opposite extreme—a coldness that often hurt people who did not understand its cause. In the anteroom I stumbled on papa, who with short rapid steps was on his way to take his seat in the calash. He was wearing his new fashionable Moscow coat and smelt of perfume. When he saw me he nodded merrily, as if to say, 'You see, it is fine!' and I was again struck by the happy expression of his eyes, which I had noticed that morning.

The drawing-room was still the same bright and lofty room, with the yellow-coloured English grand piano and large open windows, into which the green trees looked merrily over the reddish-yellow garden paths. Having kissed Lyúba and Mimi, on going up to Kátya it suddenly occurred to me that it would no longer be proper for me to kiss her, and blushing, I stopped short in silence. Kátya without being at all confused held out her little white hand and congratulated me on having entered the university. When Volódya came into the drawing-room and met Kátya, the same thing happened to him. It was really difficult to make up one's mind how we, who had grown up together and seen each other every day, were to behave now on meeting again after our first separation. Kátya blushed more than either of us. Volódya was not at all abashed, but bowing lightly to her, went over to Lyúba and having spoken to her for a short time, and not at all seriously, went out for a walk alone.

## OUR RELATIONS WITH THE GIRLS

VOLÓDYA had such strange opinions of the girls that he could pay attention to whether they had had enough to eat, whether they had slept well, whether they were properly dressed, and whether they made mistakes in French, which would cause him to feel ashamed before strangers; but he did not admit the thought that they could think or feel anything human, and still less admitted the possibility of discussing anything with them. If they happened to ask him some serious question (which however they already avoided doing), if they asked his opinion about some novel, or about his work at the university, he made a face at them and went away without speaking, or answered in broken French, such as *Com ce tri jauli*,<sup>1</sup> or put on a serious, intentionally stupid expression, and said some word that had no meaning or connexion with their question, uttering with a dull look in his eyes words like *bun*, *gone driving*, *cabbage*, or something like that. If I happened to repeat to him something Lyúba or Kátya had told me he always said:

‘Hm, so you still discuss with them! No, I see you are not yet up to much.’

And one must have heard and seen him then, to appreciate the deep unalterable contempt those words expressed. Volódya had now been grown up for two years and was always falling in love with every pretty woman he met; but though he saw Kátya every day, and she had been wearing long dresses for two years already and grew prettier every day, the possibility of falling in love with her never occurred to him. Whether this was the result of prosaic childhood memories—the ruler, the bath-sheet, the caprices—still too fresh in his memory, or of the repulsion very

<sup>1</sup> *Comme c'est très joli*. (How very pretty that is!)

young people feel from everything domestic, or of the common human inclination to neglect the good and beautiful they first meet, saying to themselves: 'Eh, I shall come across much of that sort in my life!'—whatever the reason, Volódya till then did not regard Kátya as a woman.

Volódya seemed greatly bored all that summer; his boredom resulted from his contempt of us, which as I have mentioned he did not try to conceal. The constant expression of his face said: 'Pfu! How dull! And there's no one to talk to!' He would go out with his gun in the morning, or would stay in his room without dressing till dinner-time reading a book. When papa was not at home, Volódya even came to dinner with a book and continued to read it, not speaking to any of us, which made us all feel as if we were guilty towards him. In the evening too he would lie with his feet up on the sofa in the drawing-room and sleep, leaning on his arm, or with a serious countenance would talk terrible, sometimes rather improper, nonsense, which made Mimi furious, and caused her to flush in spots, while we died with laughter; but except with papa, and very occasionally with me, he never deigned to speak seriously to any member of the household.

In my view of the girls I quite involuntarily followed my brother, though I did not fear susceptibility as he did, and my contempt for them was far from being as deep and decided as his. From dullness that summer I even tried to get nearer to, and to talk with, Lyúba and Kátya, but each time I found such a lack of capacity to think logically and such ignorance of the simplest and commonest things, such, for instance, as what money is, what is studied at the university, what war is, and so on, and such indifference to the explanations of these things, that my attempts only confirmed my unfavourable opinion of them.

I remember one evening Lyúba was repeating for the hundredth time some intolerably tiresome passage on the piano, while Volódya lay dozing on the drawing-room sofa, occasionally muttering with a sort of malevolent irony, not speaking to any one in particular: 'She does bang! . . . Musicianess! . . . *Bithoven!*' (he pronounced that name in a tone of particular irony) 'Tremendous! . . . Now once again! . . . That's it!' and so on. Kátya and I remained at the tea-table, and I remember that she somehow led the conversation to her favourite subject—love. I was in a mood to philosophize, and began condescendingly to define love as the desire to obtain from another what one lacks oneself, etc. But Kátya replied that, on the contrary, it is not love when a girl thinks of marrying a rich man, and that in her opinion, possessions were a most unimportant matter, and that it is real love only if it can endure a separation (I understood this to be a hint at her love for Dubkóv). Volódya, who no doubt heard our conversation, suddenly raised himself on his elbow and interrogatively exclaimed, 'Kátya—the Russians?'

'Always nonsense,' said Kátya.

'*Into the pepper-pot?*' Volódya went on, accentuating each vowel, and I could not help thinking that he was quite right.

Besides the general mental faculty, more or less developed in different individuals, of sentiment and artistic feeling, there exists more or less developed in different circles of society and especially in families, a special capacity which I call *understanding*. The gist of this capacity is a conventional sense of proportion, and a conventional and particular outlook on things. Two people of the same set or family who have this faculty, always permit an expression of feeling up to a certain point beyond which they both see only empty phrases. They both see at the same moment

where praise ceases and irony begins, where enthusiasm ends and pretence begins—which may all seem quite different to people having different ideas. People of the same understanding are struck by anything equally, chiefly on its comic, its beautiful, or its nasty side. To help this common understanding between people of the same set or family, a language of their own establishes itself—their own special turns of speech and even words, which indicate shades of meaning non-existent for others. In our family, this understanding was developed in the highest degree between papa and us brothers. Dubkón, too, fitted well in with our circle and *understood*. Dmítiri, however, though far more intelligent, was dull in this respect. But with no one had I developed this capacity to such a point as with Volódya, with whom I had grown up under the same conditions. Papa already lagged far behind us, and much that was as clear to us as twice two was incomprehensible to him. For instance, heaven knows why, the following words were accepted between Volódya and me with their corresponding meaning: *raisins* meant a conceited desire to show that one has money, *shell* (with one finger of each hand touching and a special stress on the *sh*) meant something fresh, healthy, and refined, but not showy; a noun used in the plural indicated a special liking for that object, etc. etc. However the meaning depended most of all on the expression of one's face and on the general conversation, so that no matter what new word one of us might invent to express a new shade of meaning, the other, at the first hint, understood it the same way. The girls did not have this *understanding* of ours, and that was the chief cause of our mental disunion, and of the contempt we felt for them.

They may have had an understanding of their own, but it did not coincide with ours, so that where we already descried empty phrases they saw feeling, and

what to us was irony to them was truth, and so on. But at that time I did not understand that they were not to blame for this and that this absence of understanding did not prevent their being pretty and intelligent girls, and I despised them. Then, having taken up with the idea of frankness and carried its application in myself to an extreme, I accused the calm and confiding Lyúba, who saw no necessity for digging up and examining all her thoughts and impulses, of secretiveness and pretence. For instance, the fact that Lyúba made the sign of the cross over papa every night, that she and Kátya wept in the chapel where we went when mass was said for our mother, or that Kátya sighed and rolled her eyes when playing the piano—all seemed to me extreme dissimulation, and I asked myself when had they learnt to pretend like grown-up people, and why were they not ashamed to do it?

### XXX

#### MY OCCUPATIONS

FOR all that I became more intimate with our young ladies this summer than in other years because of a passion for music that came to me. In the spring a neighbour came to call on us in the country—a young man who from the moment he entered the drawing-room began to look at the piano and imperceptibly move his chair towards it while talking with Mimi and Kátya. After speaking of the weather and the pleasures of country life, he adroitly led the conversation to a piano-tuner, to music, to the piano, and at last announced that he could play; and he soon played three waltzes, while Mimi, Lyúba, and Kátya stood at the piano and looked at him. After that this young man never called again at our house.



but I had been much pleased by his playing, his pose at the piano, the way he jerked back his hair, and especially his way of taking octaves with his left hand, rapidly stretching his little finger and thumb to an octave span, then slowly bringing them together, and quickly stretching them again. This graceful movement, his careless attitude, the shaking back of his hair, and the attention our ladies paid to his talent, gave me the idea of playing the piano. As a consequence of this idea, and persuaded that I had a talent and a passion for music, I began to learn it. In this respect I acted as millions of the male, and still more of the female sex do, who learn without a good master, without real vocation, and without the least understanding of what the art can give, and how to approach it so that it may yield them something. For me music, or rather piano-playing, was a means to charm young ladies with my sentiments. Having with Kátya's help learnt the notes and somewhat broken in my thick fingers—on which however I spent some two months of such assiduity that I exercised my refractory third finger even on my knee at dinner and on my pillow in bed—I immediately began to play *pièces*, and of course played them soulfully (*avec âme*) as Kátya admitted, but not at all in time.

My choice of pieces was a usual one—vales, galops, romances, arrangements, and so forth—all by those charming composers whose works every person with any healthy taste will promptly gather into a small pile from among the mass of beautiful things in a music-shop, saying: "These are what should not be played, because nothing more tasteless and meaningless than this was ever put down on music paper"; and which, no doubt for that very reason, you will find on the piano of every Russian young lady. It is true we had the unfortunate Sonata Pathétique, and Beethoven's Sonata in C Sharp Minor, for ever maimed by the young ladies, and played by Lyúba

in memory of mama, and other good pieces Lyúba's Moscow music-teacher had set her to learn, but besides there were also compositions by that teacher himself, most absurd marches and galops, which Lyúba also played. Kátya and I however did not like serious things, but preferred to everything else, 'Le Fou' and 'The Nightingale', which Kátya played so fast that one could not follow her fingers, and which I myself was beginning to play pretty loudly and smoothly. I adopted the gestures of the young man, and often regretted that no outsider was there to see me playing. But Liszt and Kalkbrenner soon proved beyond my powers, and I realized the impossibility of catching up with Kátya. In consequence, imagining classical music to be easier, and also partly for the sake of originality, I suddenly decided that I liked scientific German music, went into raptures when Lyúba played the Sonata Pathétique, though to tell the truth that sonata had long since become extremely repulsive to me, and began to play Beethoven myself and to pronounce the name as Germans do. . . . But, as I now see it, through all that muddle and pretence, there was in me something like talent, for music often affected me to tears and the things I liked I could somehow pick out on the piano without the score, so that if any one had then taught me to regard music as an aim in itself, as an independent enjoyment, and not a means of charming girls by the rapidity and soulfulness of my playing, I might perhaps have really become a decent musician.

Reading French novels, of which Volódya had brought a great many with him, was another of my occupations that summer. At that time *Monte Cristo* and the various *Mystères* were only just beginning to appear, and I revelled in the novels of Sue, Dumas, and Paul de Kock. All the most unnatural persons and events were as much alive to me as reality. I not only did not dare to suspect the authors of lying, but

the author himself did not exist for me, and real live people and real events rose of themselves before me out of the printed book. If I had never met people like those I read about, I never doubted for a moment that I should meet them some day.

I discovered in myself all the passions described, and in myself a likeness to all the characters—both the heroes and villains—of every novel, as a susceptible man when he reads a medical work detects in himself symptoms of every possible disease. I liked the cunning thoughts, the ardent feelings, the magical events, and the complete characters in those novels: the good—quite good; the bad—quite bad—just as in early youth I imagined people to be. It also pleased me very much that it was all in French, and that I could remember the noble words spoken by the noble heroes and might use them on occasion when performing some noble deed. How many French phrases I devised by the aid of those novels for Kólpikov if I ever met him again, and for *her* when I should at last meet her and reveal my love to her! I prepared such things to say to them that they would be overcome as soon as they heard me! On the basis of these novels new ideals of moral qualities which I desired to attain formed themselves in my mind. Above all in all my actions and affairs I wished to be *noble* (in the French sense, for the word has a different meaning in French, as the Germans understood when they adopted the word *noble*, not confusing it with the conception of *ehrlich*<sup>1</sup>), then to be *passionate*, and finally, to be as *comme il faut* as possible, for which I had an inclination previously. I even tried in my looks and habits to resemble the heroes who had any of these qualities. I remember that in one of the hundreds of novels I read that summer there was an extremely passionate hero with thick eyebrows, and I so desired to be like him in appearance (morally I felt myself to be exactly

<sup>1</sup> Honourable.

like him), that on examining my eyebrows before a mirror, I decided to cut them a little that they might grow thicker; but when I began to cut them I chanced to cut off too much in one place—it was necessary to make them even, and, to my horror, it finished by my seeing myself in the glass without eyebrows and consequently very ugly. However, hoping soon to grow thick eyebrows like the passionate man, I took comfort, and was only uneasy as to what to say to our people when they saw me without eyebrows. I got a little of Volódyá's gunpowder, rubbed my eyebrows with it, and put a light to it. Though the powder did not explode, I looked sufficiently like a man who has been singed for no one to find out the deception, and after I had forgotten about the passionate man my eyebrows actually grew much thicker.

## XXXI

*COMME IL FAUT*

IN the course of this narrative I have repeatedly referred to the idea corresponding to the above French heading and I now feel it necessary to devote a whole chapter to that conception—which in my own life has been one of the most pernicious and fallacious ideas with which education and society inoculated me.

Mankind may be divided into many classes—into rich and poor, good and bad, military and civilian, wise and foolish, and so forth; but each man is sure to have a favourite and chief classification of his own which he unconsciously applies to every new comer.

My favourite and chief division of people at the time of which I am writing, was into the *comme il faut* and the *comme il ne faut pas*. The latter I subdivided into those inherently not *comme il faut*, and the com-

mon people. The *comme il faut* people I respected and considered worthy of being on terms of equality with me; the *comme il ne faut pas* I pretended to despise but in reality hated, nourishing a feeling of personal offence against them; the lower classes did not exist for me—I despised them completely. My *comme il faut* consisted first and foremost in speaking excellent French, especially in pronunciation. A man who pronounced French badly at once aroused a feeling of hatred in me. ‘Why do you try to speak as we do, if you can’t?’ I mentally inquired with virulent irony. The second condition of being *comme il faut* was to have long, well-kept and clean nails. The third was to know how to bow, dance, and converse. The fourth, and a very important one, was an indifference to everything and a constant expression of elegant and contemptuous ennui. Besides this I recognized certain general indications by which, without speaking to him, I decided to what category a man belonged. The chief of these indications, besides the arrangement of his room, his gloves, his handwriting, and his carriage, were his feet. The relation of his boots to his trousers at once decided a man’s standing in my eyes. Heelless boots with square toes and trousers narrow at the bottom and without foot-straps, showed a man to be *common*. Boots with narrow rounded toes, with heels, and trousers with straps, narrow at the bottom and tight to the leg, or with straps and so wide that they overhung the foot like an awning, proved a man to be *mauvais genre*,<sup>1</sup> and so on.

It is strange that I who had a positive incapacity for being *comme il faut*, should have been so attracted by this conception. But perhaps it took such strong hold of me just because it cost me tremendous efforts to acquire this *comme il faut*. It is dreadful to remember how much of the invaluable and best period of life—the sixteen-year-old period—I wasted on

<sup>1</sup> Bad tone.

acquiring that quality. To all those whom I imitated—to Volódya, Dubkóv, and most of my friends—it seemed to come easily. I looked at them with envy, and surreptitiously worked at my French, at the art of bowing without looking at the person to whom I bowed, at conversation, dancing, and at developing in myself indifference to everything and ennui, at my nails—cutting them to the quick with scissors—but I still felt that much more labour was needed before I could reach the goal. My room, my writing-table, and my droshki, I could not arrange so that they should be *comme il faut*, though despite my disinclination for practical work I tried to attend to them. With others everything seemed to go perfectly without any effort, as if it could not be otherwise. I remember once after intensive and vain effort over my nails I asked Dubkóv, who had wonderfully good nails, whether they had long been like that and how he had managed to get them so? Dubkóv replied, 'As far back as I can remember; and I have never done anything to make them like that and I don't understand how a decent fellow can have any other nails.' This reply grieved me greatly. I did not then know that one of the chief conditions of being *comme il faut* is secrecy as to the efforts by which it is attained. To be *comme il faut* was to me not only a great merit, an admirable quality, a perfection I desired to attain, but a necessary condition of life without which there could be no happiness, no glory, nor anything good in the world. I should not have respected a famous artist, a savant, or a benefactor to the human race, if he were not *comme il faut*. A man *comme il faut* was above them and beyond comparison with them; he left it to them to paint pictures, compose music, write books, and do good; he even praised them for it—why not praise what is good in any one?—but he could not place himself on the same level with them; he was *comme il faut* and they were not, and that was

enough. I even fancy that had I had a brother, a mother, or a father, who was not *comme il faut*, I should have said it was a misfortune, but that it being so there could be nothing in common between them and me. But neither the loss of the golden hours wasted on constant effort to attend to all the, for me, difficult conditions of the *comme il faut* which precluded any serious pursuit, nor hatred and contempt for nine-tenths of the human race, nor lack of attention to all the beauty that existed outside the circle of the *comme il faut*, was the greatest evil inflicted on me by that conception. The greatest evil lay in my conviction that the *comme il faut* was an independent position in society, that it was not necessary for a man to try to become an official, a carriage-maker, a soldier, or a learned man, if he were *comme il faut*; but that having attained that position he was already fulfilling his destiny and even taking a higher position than that of the greater part of humanity.

At a certain period of his youth, after many mistakes and distractions, each man generally realizes the necessity of taking an active part in social life, chooses some kind of work, and devotes himself to it; but this seldom happens to one who is *comme il faut*. I have known and still know many, very many people, old, proud, self-confident and sharp in their judgments, who if the question were put to them in the next world: 'Who are you, and what have you done down there?' would only be able to say: '*Je fus un homme très comme il faut.*'<sup>1</sup>

That fate awaited me.

<sup>1</sup> I was a very correct man.

## XXXII

## YOUTH

DESPITE the confusion of ideas in my head that summer I was young, innocent, free, and therefore almost happy.

Often I got up early—I slept on a balcony in the open air and the slanting rays of the morning sun used to wake me—I dressed quickly, took a towel under my arm and a French novel, and went to bathe in the river, in the shade of a birch wood about a quarter of a mile from the house. Then I would lie in the shade on the grass and read, occasionally turning my eyes from the book to watch the surface of the river, purple in the shade and beginning to ripple in the morning breeze, the yellowing rye-field on the opposite bank, the bright-red morning light of the sunbeams colouring, ever lower and lower, the white trunks of the birches which hiding behind each other receded into the distance of the thick forest, and I enjoyed the consciousness of just such fresh young life within myself as Nature was breathing all around me. When there were grey morning cloudlets in the sky and I felt chilled after my bathe, regardless of roads I often went wandering across country through fields and woods, and enjoyed getting my boots wet through in the fresh dew. At such times I vividly dreamed of the heroes of the last novel I had read, and imagined myself now a general, now a minister, now an extraordinarily strong man, and now a passionate man, and I kept looking about with a certain tremor in the hope of suddenly meeting *her* somewhere in the glade or behind a tree. When during such walks I came across peasant men and women at work, despite the fact that the *common people* did not exist for me, I always involuntarily felt much confused and tried to



avoid being seen by them. When it had grown hot, but our ladies had not yet come down to breakfast, I often went into the orchard or garden to eat what fruit or vegetables were ripe, and this occupation afforded me one of my greatest pleasures. I would get into the apple-orchard and into the very midst of the thick overgrown raspberry-canes. Above my head was the bright-blue sky, around me the pale-green prickly foliage of the raspberry-canes intermingled with weeds. The dark-green nettles with their fine flowering tops stretched gracefully upwards; the broad-leaved burdocks with unnaturally lilac, prickly flowers, grew up rankly, higher than the raspberry-canes and higher than my head, and here and there, together with the nettles, reached up to the pale-green, hanging branches of the old apple-trees, on which up above facing the hot sun and polished as if of ivory, the yet green apples were ripening. Below, a young almost dried-up leafless raspberry bush, all bent, stretched towards the sun; the spiky green grass and young dockleaves, pushing out through last year's dew-drenched leaves, grew juicy and green in perpetual shade as if they did not know that the sun was playing brightly on the leaves of the apple-tree.

It was always damp in that thicket and smelt of dense and constant shade, of cobwebs, of fallen apples that, already blackening, lay on the rotting leaf-mould, and sometimes of wood-bugs, which one sometimes swallowed with a berry, quickly eating another berry to remove the taste. Pushing on you startled the sparrows which always lived among those trees; you heard their hurried twittering and the beating of their rapid little wings against the branches; in one spot you heard the humming of a big bee, and somewhere on the paths the step of the gardener, half-witted Akím, and his constant muttering to himself. You said to yourself: 'No! Neither he nor any one in the world can find me here! . . .' while with both

hands to right and left you plucked the juicy berries from their little white cones and swallowed one after another with delight. You were wet through up to above your knees, and your head was full of some awful rubbish (you repeated to yourself thousands of times: 'a-n-d by twen-ty-ty-ties and by se-e-e-vens'), your arms and legs were wet through, your trousers covered with bits of nettle; the vertical rays of the sun penetrating into the thicket began to scorch your head, the wish to eat had long passed, but you still sat in the thicket, looking about, listening, thinking, and mechanically picking and swallowing the finest berries.

I generally came into the drawing-room after ten, when the ladies had finished their breakfast and had settled at their different occupations. At the nearest window, the unbleached linen sunblind of which is down, the sun throwing through its mesh such bright fiery circles on anything in its way that it makes the eyes ache to look at them, stands an embroidery-frame, and flies crawl over the white linen on it. At the frame sits Mimí, continually jerking her head irritably and moving from place to place to avoid the sun, which keeps getting in somewhere and throwing fiery streaks now here now there, on her face or hand. Through the other three windows, with the shadows of their frames, whole bright squares fall on the unstained wood of the drawing-room floor, upon one of which, from old habit, lies Milka who, pricking her ears, watches the flies as they walk over one of these bright squares. Kátya, seated on the sofa, knits or reads and impatiently flicks off the flies with her small white hands that seem transparent in the bright light or, frowning, shakes her head to drive away a buzzing fly entangled in her thick golden hair. Lyúba either paces up and down the room with her hands behind her, waiting for them to go into the garden, or plays some piece on the piano with every note of

which I have long been familiar. I sit down somewhere and listen to the music or the reading, and wait till I can have the piano myself. After dinner I sometimes condescend to go for a ride with the girls (to go for a walk I considered unsuitable to my age and position in society)—and our rides, during which I lead them through unaccustomed places and over ravines, are very pleasant. Sometimes we meet with adventures in which I show myself to be a fine fellow, and the ladies praise my riding and courage and consider me their protector. In the evening, if we have no visitors, after tea which we drink on the shady verandah, and after a stroll with papa over the farm, I lie back in my old place, the lounge chair, and while listening to Kátya or Lyúba playing, I read and at the same time dream as of old. Sometimes remaining alone in the drawing-room where Lyúba is playing some old tune, I mechanically put down my book and look out of the open verandah door at the drooping thickly-leaved branches of the tall birches over which the evening shadows are creeping, and at the clear sky on which, when you gaze at it intently, a little dusty-looking yellowish spot suddenly appears which vanishes again, and listen to the sounds of the music from the ball-room, to the creaking of the gate, the voices of women and of the herd returning to the village; and I suddenly and vividly recall Natályá Sávislna, mama, and Karl Iványch, and for a moment feel sad. But my soul at that period is so full of life and hope that these memories only touch me with their wings and fly away.

After supper and sometimes a night-time walk in the garden with some one—I was afraid of going by myself in the dark alleys—I went off alone to sleep on the verandah, which, in spite of my being devoured by millions of night mosquitoes, I greatly enjoyed. When the moon was full I often spent whole nights seated on my mattress, peering into the lights and

shadows, listening to the stillness and the sounds, dreaming about different things, chiefly about poetic voluptuous joys which then seemed to me the highest happiness, and grieving that up to then it had only been given me to imagine them. Sometimes as soon as all had retired and the lights had gone from the drawing-room to the rooms upstairs, whence came the sounds of women's voices and of windows being opened or shut, I went out on to the verandah and paced up and down, eagerly listening to all the sounds of the house as it lapsed into sleep. As long as there was the slightest, unfounded hope of even a partial realization of happiness such as I hoped for, I could not calmly construct an imaginary bliss for myself.

At every sound of a bare footstep, of a cough, of a sigh, of a touch given to a window, or the rustle of a dress, I would spring up from my mattress, stealthily listening and peering like a robber, and would grow excited without apparent reason. But at last the lights would vanish from the windows upstairs, the sounds of footsteps and conversation would be replaced by snoring, the night-watchman would begin to beat his board, and the garden become both darker and lighter as soon as the streaks of red light on it from the windows had vanished. The last light, from the pantry would move into the anteroom, throwing a ray of light on the dewy garden, and through the window I could see the stooping figure of Fóka, in a jacket and with a candle in his hand, going to his bed. I often found great and agitating delight in stealing through the wet grass in the dark shadow of the house to the anteroom window, listening with bated breath to the snores of the page-boy and the groans of Fóka, who thought nobody heard him, and to the sound of his aged voice as for a long long while he recited his prayers. At last his, the last of the lights, was extinguished, the window slammed to, and I was left quite alone, glancing timidly around

on all sides to see whether there was not a white woman anywhere among the garden beds or beside my mattress. I would run full speed to the verandah. Then I would lie down on my bed facing the garden and covering myself as well as I could from the mosquitos and bats, gaze into the garden, listening to the voices of the night and dreaming of love and happiness.

Then everything acquired a new meaning for me; the sight of the old birches with their leafy boughs glistening in the moonlight on one side and covering the bushes and road with their black shadows on the other, and the calm splendid brilliance of the pond increasing steadily like a sound, and the glitter of the moon in the dewdrops on the flowers in front of the verandah, which also threw their graceful shadows across the grey beds; and the sound of a quail beyond the pond, the voice of a man from the highway, the soft scarcely audible scraping of two old birch-trees against one another, the buzz of a mosquito above my ear beneath my quilt, and the fall of an apple that catching on a twig fell on the dry leaves, the jumping of the frogs that sometimes made their way close up to the verandah steps, their greenish backs shining mysteriously in the moonlight : all these things assumed a strange significance for me—the significance of too great a beauty and of a sort of incomplete happiness. And now *she* appeared, with her long plait of hair and her full bosom, always sad and lovely, with bare arms and voluptuous embraces. She loved me, and for one moment of her love I sacrificed my whole life. But the moon rose higher and higher and brighter and brighter in the sky, the sumptuous brilliance of the pond, steadily swelling like a sound, grew clearer and clearer, the shadows became darker and darker, the light more and more transparent, and gazing at and listening to it all, I heard in all this something saying that *she* with her bare arms and

ardent embraces was still very very far from being the whole of happiness, that love for her was very very far from being the only good; and the more I gazed at the high full moon the more lofty did real beauty and happiness appear to me and the higher and the purer and nearer to Him, to the source of all beauty and bliss; and tears of unsatisfied but agitating joy rose to my eyes.

And still I was alone and still it seemed to me that this mysterious majestic nature attracting to itself the bright circle of the moon that seemed to stand at a high uncertain spot in the pale-blue sky and yet was present everywhere and seemed to fill all immeasurable space, and I, an insignificant worm already defiled by all sorts of mean, paltry, human passions, but with a boundless, mighty power of love—at those moments it seemed to me that nature, the moon, and I, were all one and the same.

### XXXIII

#### OUR NEIGHBOURS

I WAS very much surprised when the first day after our arrival, papa called our neighbours, the Epifánovs, 'splendid people', and still more when I found that he visited them. We had long been engaged in litigation with the Epifánovs about some land. As a child I had often heard papa get angry about this litigation, and had heard him abuse the Epifánovs and send for various people in order, as I understood it, to protect himself against them; I had heard Jacob call them 'our enemies' and 'black people',<sup>1</sup> and I remember mama's asking that they should not even be mentioned in her house and in her presence.

<sup>1</sup> The expression 'black people' is often used to indicate the common folk.

From these facts I had gathered in childhood so firm and clear a notion that the Epifánovs were our *enemies*, who were prepared to stab or strangle not only papa but also his son if they got hold of him, and that they were literally *black* people, that when in the year of my mother's death I saw Avdótya Vasílyevna Epifánova—*la belle Flamande*—attending her, I could hardly believe that she was one of the family of *black* people, and I still retained my very low opinion of them. Though during all this summer we often met them, I remained strangely prejudiced against their whole family. In fact, the Epifánov family consisted of a widowed mother of about fifty, still a fresh and lively woman, a beautiful daughter, Avdótya Vasílyevna, and a stammering bachelor son, a retired lieutenant, a very serious man—Peter Vasílich Epifánov.

Anna Dmítrievna Epifánova had lived apart from her husband for twenty years before his death, sometimes in Petersburg where she had relations, but mostly on her estate, Mytíshchi, some two miles from ours. Such horrors were told of her in the district as made Messalina an innocent child by comparison. It was because of this that mama had asked that Epifánova's name should not be even mentioned in our house; but speaking quite without irony, one cannot believe a tenth of that worst of all scandals—scandal among country neighbours. When I first met Anna Dmítrievna, though she had in her house a self, a clerk called Mitúsha, who in a Circassian coat and with his hair curled and pomaded, always stood behind her chair at dinner and she often in his presence invited her visitors, in French, to admire his beautiful eyes and mouth, there was nothing at all like what rumour still reported. Really it seems that ten years previously, when Anna Dmítrievna had called on her dutiful son Peter to leave the army and come home, she had entirely changed her manner of life. Her

estate was not a large one. She had in all only a little more than a hundred serfs, and the expenses during the gay period of her life had been heavy, so that ten years before this, the payments on her mortgaged and re-mortgaged estate were naturally overdue, and it had unavoidably to be sold by auction. In this extremity Anna Dmitrievna, supposing that the trusteeship, the inventory taken of her property, the arrival of the sheriffs, and other similar unpleasantnesses, arose not so much from the non-payment of the interest as from the fact that she was a woman, wrote to her son in the regiment, to come and save his mother in this strait. Though Peter Epifánov was doing so well in the service that he expected soon to be able to keep himself, he gave everything up, retired from the army like a dutiful son, considering it his first duty to comfort his mother in her old age (as he wrote to her quite sincerely in his letter) and returned to the village.

Notwithstanding his plain face, his clumsiness, and his stammer, Peter was a high-principled man with an unusually practical mind. In one way or another by the aid of small loans, various expedients, petitions, and promises, he managed to preserve the estate. Having become a landed proprietor he put on his father's Hungarian jacket, which had been laid up in the store-room, dispensed with the horses and carriages, taught visitors not to come to Mytishchi, dug drains, increased the amount of arable land, decreased the allotment to the serfs, had his woods felled by his own serfs, sold the timber profitably, and brought his affairs into order. Peter vowed, and kept his word, that till the debts were all paid he would not wear any coat except his father's Hungarian jacket or a canvas coat he made for himself, and would not ride in anything but a peasant cart with peasant horses. This stoic manner of life he tried to impress on all the family as far as his obsequious respect for his mother



—which he considered to be his duty—allowed him. In the drawing-room he stammered and cringed before his mother, fulfilled all her wishes and scolded the servants if they did not do what she ordered; but in his study and in the office he called every one strictly to account if a duck were sent to table without his orders, or if at Anna Dmítrievna's command a serf had been sent to inquire about a neighbour's health, or if serf-girls went to the woods to gather raspberries instead of weeding in the vegetable garden.

In about four years the debts were all paid and Peter went to Moscow and returned in a tarantass<sup>1</sup> and wearing new clothes. But in spite of the flourishing state of his affairs he still retained his stoical proclivities, in which he seemed to take a gloomy pride before his own people and strangers; and he often said with a stammer: 'Any one who really wants to see me will be glad to see me even in a peasant sheepskin, and will eat my cabbage-soup and buckwheat porridge. After all I eat them myself,' he would add. His every word and gesture expressed pride, founded on a consciousness of having sacrificed himself for his mother and having redeemed the estate, and scorn for those who had not done anything of the kind.

The character of the mother and daughter was not at all like this, and in many respects they also differed from one another. The mother was one of the pleasantest women, always good-naturedly bright in society. Everything that was nice and cheerful gave her real pleasure. She even had the characteristic—met with only in the kindest-hearted old people—of enjoying the sight of young people making merry, and she had this in the highest degree. Her daughter, Avdotya Vasilyevna, was on the contrary of a serious character, or rather had that peculiarly indifferent nature, causelessly haughty, that unmarried beauties

<sup>1</sup> A four-wheeled vehicle—a considerable improvement on a peasant cart, and suitable for bad roads.

usually possess. When she wished to be gay her mirth seemed strange—as if she were laughing at herself or at those with whom she spoke, or at the whole world, which she assuredly did not mean to do. She often surprised me, and I asked myself what she could have meant, by such phrases as: ‘Yes, I am awfully handsome! Of course everybody is in love with me!’ and so on. Anna Dmítrievna was always active; she had a passion for arranging the house and garden, for flowers, canaries, and pretty trifles. Her rooms and her garden were not large or fine, but everything was so neat, so clean, and everything bore such a general character of the dainty gaiety expressed by a pretty valse or a polka, that the words *pretty toy*, often used in commendation of them by visitors, suited her garden and rooms extremely well. And Anna Dmítrievna herself was a *pretty toy*, small, thin, with a fresh complexion and pretty little hands, always gay and always becomingly dressed. Only the rather too swollen, dark-purple veins that showed on her small hands disturbed this general impression. Avdótya Vasil’yevna on the contrary hardly ever did anything, and not only disliked attending to dainty trifles and flowers but did not even attend sufficiently to herself, and always ran away to dress when visitors arrived. But when she returned dressed she looked extremely handsome, except for the cold monotonous expression of her eyes and smile, common to all very handsome people. Her strictly regular, beautiful face and stately figure, seemed always saying to you: ‘You may look at me if you like!’

But notwithstanding the lively nature of the mother and the absent-mindedly apathetic appearance of the daughter, something told you that the former had never—either now or previously—loved anything except what was pretty and gay, but that Avdótya Vasil’yevna had one of those natures which if once they love, would sacrifice their whole life for the loved one.

## OUR FATHER'S MARRIAGE

My father was forty-eight when he married his second wife, Avdótya Vasílyevna Epifánova.

Having come to the country with only the girls, papa, I imagine, was in the peculiar agitatedly happy and sociable state of mind gamblers usually are in when they stop playing after winning much. He felt that he had still a great store of unspent happiness which, if he no longer wished to spend it on cards he might devote to general success in life. Besides, it was spring, he had unexpectedly much money and was alone and dull. Talking business affairs over with Jacob and recalling the endless litigation with the Epifánovs, and the beautiful Avdótya Vasílyevna whom he had not seen for a long time, I imagine him saying to Jacob: 'Do you know, Jacob Kharlámpych, instead of bothering about that lawsuit I think it would be simpler to let them have that damned land, eh? What do you think?'

I imagine how Jacob's thumbs began to twist negatively behind his back at such a question, and how he argued that: 'On the other hand, ours is a just case, sir.'

But papa ordered his calash, put on his new-fashioned olive Hungarian coat, brushed the remainder of his hair, sprinkled his handkerchief with scent, and in the gayest spirits, aroused by the conviction that he was behaving like a gentleman and above all by the hope of meeting a good-looking woman, went to call on his neighbours.

I only know that on his first visit papa did not find Peter Epifánov who was out in the fields, and spent a couple of hours alone with the ladies. I imagine how he launched out into compliments, how he charmed them, tapping the floor with his soft boot,

whispering, and looking sentimental. I imagine too how the merry old lady suddenly began to like him, and how her cold, beautiful daughter brightened up.

When a maid ran, panting, to inform Peter Epifánov that old Irtényev himself had arrived, I imagine how Peter crossly replied: 'Well, what if he has arrived?' and how in consequence he walked home as slowly as he could, and perhaps also on reaching his room purposely put on his dirtiest coat and sent to tell the cook that if his mistress ordered him to cook anything extra for dinner he should on no account do so.

I often saw papa and Epifánov together afterwards, and so can vividly imagine that first meeting. I imagine how, though papa offered to settle their dispute amicably, Peter remained morose and cross, because he had sacrificed his career for his mother while papa had done nothing of the kind; how nothing surprised him, and how papa as if unaware of that moroseness, was playful, gay, and treated Peter as a wonderful humorist—which Peter sometimes resented, though occasionally against his will he could not help yielding to it. Papa with his inclination to treat everything as a joke, called Peter 'Colonel' for some reason or other, and although the latter once, stammering worse than usual and blushing with vexation, remarked in my presence that he was not a 'co-co-co-colonel, but a lieu-lieu-lieu-lieutenant',<sup>1</sup> papa five minutes later, again addressed him as Colonel.

Lyúba told me that before we came to the country they saw the Epifánovs every day and had an extremely good time. Papa with his skill at arranging everything with originality, humorously, and yet simply and with good taste, got up some hunting, fishing, and some fireworks, at which the Epifánovs

<sup>1</sup> The Russian words for colonel and lieutenant begin with the same syllable, which may furnish some shadow of excuse for Irtényev's confusion of them.

were present. 'And it would have been still jollier if that insufferable Peter Vasilich had not been present; sulking, stammering, and upsetting everything,' Lyúba remarked.

After our arrival the Epifánovs had only been twice to see us, and once we all drove to their house. But after St. Peter's day, papa's name-day, when they and a crowd of visitors came, our intercourse with the Epifánovs for some reason ceased completely and papa alone continued to visit them.

During the short time that I saw papa together with Avdótya—or Dúnichka as her mother called her—I managed to notice the following. Papa was always in the same happy frame of mind as had struck me on the day of our arrival. He was so gay, young, full of life and happy, that the beams of his happiness spread to all around and involuntarily infected them with the same mood. He did not go a step away from Avdótya Vasilyevna when she was in the room, continually paid her such sickly-sweet compliments that I felt ashamed for him, or gazing silently at her, twitched his shoulder in a passionate and self-satisfied kind of way, coughed, sometimes smiled, and even whispered to her; but he did it all quite in the jesting way characteristic of him even in very serious matters.

Avdótya Vasilyevna seemed to have assimilated papa's happy expression, which at that time shone in her large blue eyes almost continually, except when she was suddenly seized with such shyness that I, who knew that feeling, felt pained and sorry to see her. At such moments she seemed to be afraid of every glance or movement, imagined that every one was looking at her, thinking only of her, and finding everything about her improper. She looked around at everybody in alarm, the colour came and went in her face, and she began to speak loudly and boldly, uttering nonsense for the most part, felt this, and felt that everybody including papa, had heard her, and

then blushed still more. But on such occasions papa did not even notice the nonsense; he continued coughing just as passionately and looking at her with joyous rapture. I noticed that these fits of shyness though they used to occur without any reason, sometimes immediately followed a mention in papa's presence of some young and beautiful woman. Her frequent transitions from pensiveness to the kind of strange and awkward gaiety to which I have already referred, her use of papa's favourite words and turns of speech, her way of continuing with others a conversation begun with papa—all this, if the person concerned had not been my own father or had I been a little older, would have explained to me what their relations were, but at that time I suspected nothing, even when on receiving in my presence a letter from Peter Epifánov, papa seemed much upset and ceased his visits to the Epifánovs till the end of August.

At the end of August papa again began visiting our neighbours, and the day before Volódya and I left for Moscow he announced to us that he was going to marry Avdótya Vasílyevna Epifánova.

## XXXV

### HOW WE TOOK THE NEWS

ON the day before this official announcement every one in the house knew and discussed the matter from various sides. Mimí did not leave her room all day and wept. Kátya stayed with her, and only came out to dinner, with an injured expression on her face evidently borrowed from her mother; Lyúba on the other hand was very cheerful, and remarked at dinner that she knew a splendid secret which however she would not tell any one.

'There is nothing splendid in your secret,' Volódya

said to her, by no means sharing her satisfaction. 'If you could think seriously about anything, you would understand that on the contrary it's very bad.'

Lyúba looked intently at him with amazement and said no more.

After dinner Volódya was about to take my arm, but probably afraid that this would look like susceptibility, merely touched my elbow and nodded his head towards the ball-room.

'Do you know what secret Lyúba was speaking about?' he asked when he was sure we were alone.

Volódya and I seldom spoke to one another alone and about anything serious, so that when this happened we felt a kind of mutual awkwardness, and 'specks began to dance in our eyes', as he phrased it. But that day, in response to my look of confusion, he continued to gaze seriously straight into my eyes with an expression which seemed to say: 'There's no need for confusion. After all we are brothers and must consult together on family matters.' I understood him, and he continued:

'Papa is going to marry the Epifánova, you know.'

I nodded, because I had already heard about it.

'You know it's not at all good!' Volódya continued.

'Why?'

'Why?' he replied with vexation. 'It's very pleasant to have a stammering uncle like that colonel, and all those connexions. Besides, though she now seems kindly and all right, who knows how she'll turn out later? Granted that it won't matter to us, but Lyúba must soon come out into the world. With a step-mother like that it won't be very pleasant. She even speaks French badly, and what kind of manners can she give her? She's a fishwife, that's all she is—perhaps a kindly one, but nevertheless a fishwife,' Volódya concluded, evidently pleased with the term 'fishwife'.

Strange as it was to me to hear Volódya judging papa's choice so calmly, he seemed to me to be right.

'Why is papa marrying?' I asked.

'That's a queer story. Heaven only knows! All I know is that Peter Epifánov persuaded him and insisted that he should marry her; that papa did not want to, and then the fancy seized him out of some idea of chivalry. It's a queer story! I am only now beginning to understand father,' Volódya continued (that he called him 'father' and not 'papa' stung me painfully). 'He is a fine man, kind and intelligent, but such lightmindedness and flightiness—it's amazing! He can't look at a woman calmly. Why, you know that he has never been acquainted with a woman without falling in love with her. You know Mimí too . . .'

'What do you mean?'

'I tell you it is so. I found it out only a while ago, he was in love with Mimí when she was young, and wrote verses to her, and there was something between them. Mimí suffers till now!' and Volódya laughed.

'Impossible!' I said, with surprise.

'But the chief thing is,' Volódya went on, becoming serious again and beginning to speak in French, 'how pleased all our relations will be at such a marriage! And she'll be sure to have children.'

I was so struck by Volódya's sensible view and foresight, that I did not know what to say.

At that moment Lyúba came in.

'So you know?' she said with a happy look.

'Yes,' answered Volódya, 'but I am surprised, Lyúba—after all you are not a babe in arms—that you should be pleased that papa is marrying some sort of riff-raff!'

Lyúba suddenly looked grave and became thoughtful.

'Why riff-raff, Volódya? How dare you speak so of Avdótya Vasílyevna? If papa is going to marry her, of course she is not riff-raff.'



'Well—not riff-raff—I only put it like that, but all the same . . .'

'There 's no "all the same" about it,' Lyúba interrupted him warmly, 'I did not say that the young lady you are in love with was riff-raff. How can you speak like that about papa and a splendid woman? Though you are my eldest brother, do not say that to me. You must not say it!'

'But why should we not discuss . . .?'

'One must not discuss,' Lyúba interrupted again, 'one must not discuss a father like ours. Mimi may discuss him, but not you, our eldest brother.'

'No, you don't understand anything yet!' said Volódya contemptuously. 'You just think! Will it be nice that some Epifánova—Dúnichka<sup>1</sup>—should take the place of your dead mother?'

Lyúba was silent for a moment and tears suddenly rose to her eyes.

'I knew you were proud, but I did not think you were so spiteful,' she said, and went away.

'*Into the bun*,' said Volódya, making a serio-comic face and with a vacant look. 'There now, just try to argue with them,' he continued as if reproaching himself for having so far forgotten himself as to deign to converse with Lyúba.

The weather was bad the next morning, and neither papa nor the ladies had come down to breakfast when I entered the drawing-room. There had been a cold autumnal rain during the night; the remnants of the clouds that had almost emptied themselves during the night were flying across the sky, and the light disk of the sun, already high in the heavens, shone dimly through them. It was windy, damp, and cold. The door was open into the garden, and puddles left by the night's rain were drying on the floor of the

<sup>1</sup> Dúnichka is a diminutive, and a rather contemptuous diminutive, of Avdótya.

verandah, dark with moisture. The open door fastened back with a cabin-hook, shook in the wind, the paths were damp and muddy; the old birches with their bare white boughs, the bushes, the grass, the nettles, the currant and elder-bushes with the pale linings of their leaves turned outward, swaying in their places, seemed to be trying to tear themselves from their roots. Down the lime-tree avenue, whirling and chasing one another, the round yellow leaves came flying and lay down saturated on the path and on the dark-green aftermath of the meadow. My thoughts were occupied with my father's impending marriage, from the point of view from which Volódya regarded it. My sister's future, our own, and even our father's, did not seem to me to promise anything good. I was filled with indignation at the thought that an outsider, a stranger, and above all, a *young* woman without any right to it, should usurp in many ways the place of—whom? An ordinary *young* lady would usurp the place of my dead mother! I felt sad, and my father seemed to me more and more to blame. Just then I heard him talking with Volódya in the pantry. I did not want to see my father at that moment and I passed out through the door, but Lyúba came for me and said that papa was asking for me.

He was standing in the drawing-room leaning with his hand on the piano and looking impatiently and yet solemnly in my direction. There was no longer that look of youth and happiness on his face which I had observed on it all this time. He was sad. Volódya was pacing the room with a pipe in his hand. I came up to my father and wished him good morning.

'Well, my dears,' he said with decision, raising his head and in that peculiarly brisk tone in which evidently unpleasant things which it is too late to discuss are spoken of. 'I think you know that I am going to marry Avdótya Vasilyevna—' he paused.

'I never meant to marry again after your mama . . . but—' he hesitated for a moment '—but it is evidently fate! Dúnya is a good, kind girl and no longer very young. I hope you will learn to love her, children, and she already loves you from her heart. She is good. You,' he said, turning to me and Volódya and hurrying to speak for fear we might interrupt him, 'will soon be going, but I shall remain here till the New Year, and will come to Moscow,' he hesitated again, 'with my wife and Lyúba.' It pained me to see my father apparently feeling abashed and guilty towards us, and I went nearer to him, but Volódya, continuing to smoke and hanging his head, still paced up and down the room.

'Ah, yes, my dears, see what your old father has taken into his head!' papa concluded, blushing, coughing, and holding out his hands to Volódya and me. There were tears in his eyes as he said this and I noticed that the hand which he held out to Volódya, who was at the other side of the room just then, trembled a little. The sight of that trembling hand struck me painfully and a strange thought occurred to me and touched me still more, namely, that papa had served in the campaign of 1812 and was well known to be a brave officer. I kept his large, muscular hand in mine and kissed it. He pressed mine closely and, gulping down his tears, suddenly took Lyúba's dark little head in his hands and kissed her on the eyes. Volódya pretended to drop his pipe, bent down, stealthily wiped his eyes with his fist and, trying not to be noticed, went out of the room.

## XXXVI .

## THE UNIVERSITY

THE wedding was to take place in a fortnight; but our lectures at the university were beginning, and Volódyá and I went back to Moscow in the first days of September. The Nekhlyúdovs also returned from the country. Dmítri (with whom at parting I had exchanged promises to write, though of course neither of us had written the other a single letter) came to see me at once, and it was arranged that he should take me with him to the university for my first lecture.

It was a bright and sunny day.

As soon as I entered the auditorium I felt my personality disappearing in the throng of gay young people which, in the bright sunshine flowing in through the large windows, surged noisily through all the corridors and doorways.

The consciousness of being a member of that great company was very pleasant. But I knew only a very few of all these people, and my acquaintanceship with them went no farther than a nod and the words: 'How d'you do, Irtényev?' Around me there was hand-shaking, pushing—smiles and friendly words and jests showered from all sides. I was conscious everywhere of the bond uniting this youthful company and felt with sorrow that this bond seemed to miss me. But this was only a momentary impression. As a consequence of this and of the vexation born of it, I soon concluded that it was even a very good thing that I did not belong to all that society, that I must have a circle of my own, of decent people, and I took a seat on the third bench, where Count B., Baron Z., Prince R., Ívin and others of that class sat—of whom I knew Ívin and Count B. But these gentlemen too looked at me so that I felt I did not quite belong to them either. I began noticing all that went on around

me. Semënov with his rumpled grey hair, white teeth, and unbuttoned coat, sat not far from me and, leaning on his elbows, gnawed a quill pen. The high-school lad who had been first at the examinations sat on the front bench with a black neck-cloth still tied round his cheek, and played with a silver watch-key that hung on his satin waistcoat. Ikónin, who had after all managed to enter the university, sat on a raised bench, wearing pale-blue trousers with stripes down the seams and that hung quite over his boots, laughing, and shouting out that he was on Parnassus. Ílinka, who to my surprise bowed to me coldly and even contemptuously as if wishing to remind me that we were all equals here, sat in front of me and, throwing his thin legs on to the bench in a very free-and-easy manner (on my account as it seemed to me), talked with another student and occasionally glanced round at me. Beside me the Ívin set were talking French. These gentlemen appeared to me awfully stupid. Every word I heard of their conversation seemed to me not merely senseless but even incorrect, simply not French (*'Ce n'est pas français'* I said to myself), and the attitude, the words, and the actions of Semënov, Ílinka, and the others of their set, seemed to me ungentle, incorrect, and not *comme il faut*.

I did not belong to any group, and feeling myself isolated and incapable of sociability, I chafed. A student on the bench in front of me bit his nails, and his fingers with red hangnails seemed so disgusting that I even moved farther away from him. I was, I remember, sad at heart that first day.

When the Professor entered everybody moved and then became silent. I remember that my satirical observation extended to him and I was struck by his beginning his lecture with an introductory sentence which, in my opinion, did not make sense. I wanted the lecture to be so clever from beginning to end that it would be impossible to omit, or add to it, a single

word. Disappointed in this, under the heading 'First Lecture' written in a handsomely-bound note-book I had brought with me, I immediately sketched eighteen profiles, forming a wreath-like circle, and only occasionally moved my hand across the page that the Professor (who I felt convinced was much interested in me) might think I was taking notes. Having at this lecture decided that it was unnecessary, and would even be foolish, to take down everything that each of the professors said, I kept to this rule to the end of the course.

At the following lectures I did not feel so isolated; I became acquainted with many of the students, shook hands and talked, but for some reason real intimacy between me and my comrades was still lacking, and it therefore often happened that I felt sad at heart and pretended. With Ívin's set of 'aristocrats', as everybody called them, I could not become intimate because, as I now remember, I was shy and rude with them and only bowed when they had first bowed to me, and they seemed to have very little need of my company. With the majority however the cause was quite a different one. As soon as I felt that a fellow-student was becoming well-disposed towards me, I immediately gave him to understand that I dined with Prince Iván and had my own trap. I said all this merely to show myself off to better advantage and that my fellow-student should like me the more for it: but on the contrary almost every time, to my amazement, my comrade, as a result of the information that I was related to Prince Iván and had a trap, suddenly became proud and cold to me.

We had among us a bursar-student, Opérov, a modest, very capable and industrious young man, who always offered his hand as if it were a board, not bending his fingers or moving them at all, so that the jesters among his comrades also held out theirs 'like little boards', as they called it, when they shook

hands with him. I almost always took a seat beside him and often talked with him. I specially liked Opérov because of the free opinions he expressed about the professors. He defined the merits and defects of each professor's lecture very clearly and precisely and even occasionally ridiculed them, which seemed to me specially strange and striking when spoken in his quiet voice and coming from his tiny mouth. Nevertheless he carefully noted down, in his minute handwriting, all the lectures without exception. We were already becoming intimate and had decided to prepare for the examinations together, and his small grey short-sighted eyes had already begun to turn towards me with pleasure when I came to sit beside him, when I found it necessary to tell him once in the course of conversation that my mother, when dying, had asked my father not to send us to any institution supported by the crown, and that all crown scholars, though they might be very learned, seemed to me not at all the thing—'*Ce ne sont pas des gens comme il faut*', I said falteringly and feeling that I was growing red for some reason. Opérov said nothing to me, but at the following lectures he did not greet me first, did not hold out his 'board' to me, and when I took my seat, bent his head to one side close to his note-books as if examining them. I was surprised by his causeless coolness, but I considered that *pour un jeune homme de bonne maison*<sup>1</sup> it would not be proper to curry favour with a bursar-student like Opérov, and I left him alone, although I confess that his coolness grieved me. Once I arrived earlier than he, and as the lecture was by a favourite professor to which students came who did not always attend, and all the places were occupied, I took Opérov's place, laid my note-books on the desk, and went out. On returning to the auditorium I saw that my note-books had been moved to a place farther back and Opérov

<sup>1</sup> For a young man of good family.

was sitting in my place. I remarked to him that I had put my note-books there.

'I don't know,' he said, suddenly flushing up and not looking at me.

'I tell you I put my note-books here,' said I, purposely getting heated and thinking to frighten him by my boldness. 'Everybody saw it,' I added turning to the other students, but though many looked at me with curiosity no one responded.

'The places here are not purchased; the one who comes first takes the seat,' said Opérov, moving in his place and momentarily giving me an indignant glance.

'That shows you are ill-bred,' I said.

I think Opérov muttered something. I even thought he said: 'and you are a stupid urchin.' I did not hear it clearly. Besides, where would have been the use if I had heard?—only to have a quarrel like some *manant* (boor). (I was very fond of that word *manant*, and it served me as an answer to and a solution of many perplexities.) I might have said something more, but at that moment the door slammed and the professor, in his blue dress-coat, bowed and hastily ascended the platform.

Before the examinations, however, when I was in need of the notes, Opérov, remembering his promise, offered me his and invited me to study with him.

## XXXVII

### AFFAIRS OF THE HEART

AFFAIRS of the heart occupied me a good deal that winter. I was in love three times. Once I fell passionately in love with a very plump lady who rode in Freitag's riding-school, and consequently every Tuesday and Friday—the days on which she rode—I went to the school to look at her, but was always



so afraid lest she should see me, that I stood so far away from her and fled so quickly from the place she had to pass, and turned away so indifferently when she chanced to look my way, that I did not so much as get a good look at her face, and till now do not know whether she were really good-looking or not.

Dubkóv, who knew the lady, meeting me one day at the riding-school where I was standing behind the footmen and the fur coats they were holding, and having heard of my passion from Dmítri, so frightened me by a proposal to introduce me to this amazon that I ran headlong from the riding-school; and the very idea that he had told her about me, prevented my daring to enter the school again even as far as the footmen's place, for fear of meeting her.

When I was in love with strangers, and especially with married women, I was overcome by shyness a thousand times greater than that I had experienced with Sónya. I feared nothing in the world so much as that the object of my love should know of my passion or even of my existence. It seemed to me that if she knew of the feeling I had for her, it would be such an insult as she could never forgive. And indeed if that lady rider had known in detail of how, looking at her from behind the footmen, I imagined that I might carry her off, take her to the country, and how I should live with her there and what I should do with her, perhaps she might justly have been very much offended. But I could not clearly realize that on making my acquaintance she would still not suddenly become aware of all my thoughts about her, and that there would therefore be nothing shameful in simply making her acquaintance.

Another time, I fell in love with Sónya when she came to see my sister. My second fit of love for her had passed long ago, but I fell in love a third time because Lyúba gave me a book of verses copied out by Sónya, in which, in Lermontov's *Demon*, many

gloomily amorous passages were underlined in red ink and had flowers inserted to mark them. Remembering how Volódya the year before, had kissed his lady-love's purse, I tried to do the same; and really one evening when in my room I began to muse, looking at one of the flowers and pressing it to my lips, I felt an agreeably tearful sentiment and was again in love, or at least thought so for some days.

Finally, the third time that winter, I fell in love with a young lady with whom Volódya was in love, and who used to visit at our house. About this young lady, as I now remember her, there was nothing at all beautiful, and in particular nothing of the kind that usually appealed to me. She was the daughter of a well-known intellectual and learned Moscow woman, small, lean, with long fair curls English fashion, and a transparent profile. Everybody said the young lady was cleverer and more learned than her mother, but I could not at all judge of this, as, feeling a kind of servile fear of her mind and her learning, I spoke with her only once and then with inexplicable trepidation. But the enthusiasm of Volódya, who was never restrained by the presence of others from expressing his feelings, communicated itself to me so powerfully that I fell passionately in love with the young lady. Thinking that Volódya would consider it unpleasant for *two brothers to be in love with the same maiden*, I did not speak to him of my love. On the contrary what pleased me most in this sentiment was that it was so pure that, although the object of our love was one and the same charming being, we should remain friends and be prepared in case of necessity to sacrifice ourselves for one another. However as to readiness for self-sacrifice, Volódya did not seem quite to share my views, for he was so passionately in love that he wished to slap a real diplomat's face and challenge him to a duel, when it was reported that he was about to marry her. I felt it

very pleasant to sacrifice my feelings, perhaps because it did not cost me any great effort, as I had only had one, affected, conversation with that young lady on the merits of classical music, and my love, hard as I tried to keep it up, disappeared the next week.

## XXXVIII

## SOCIETY

I WAS quite disillusioned that winter by the social pleasures to which, in imitation of my elder brother, I had dreamt of devoting myself on entering the university. Volódya danced a great deal and papa also frequented balls with his young wife, but they must have considered me either too young or not suited for these pleasures, and no one introduced me in the houses where balls were given. In spite of my promise to be frank with Dmítri I did not tell him or any one else how much I wanted to go to balls, and how painful and vexing it was to be forgotten and evidently regarded as a sort of a philosopher—which I consequently pretended to be.

But the Princess Kornakóva gave an evening party that winter and came herself to invite us all, including me; and I was to go to a ball for the first time. Before we went, Volódya came to my room and wanted to see how I dressed. I was much surprised and perplexed by his doing so. I imagined that the wish to be well dressed was very disgraceful and should be concealed; while he on the other hand considered this wish so natural and indispensable that he told me quite frankly that he was afraid I might discredit myself. He told me to be sure to put on patent-leather boots, and was horrified that I wanted to wear suede gloves; he adjusted my watch for me in a particular way, and took me to a hairdresser's on the Smith's

Bridge Street. They curled my hair, and Volódya stepped back and viewed me from a distance.

'Now that's right; only can't one really smooth down those tufts?' he said to the hairdresser.

But however much M. Charles smeared my tufts of hair with a sticky essence, they still rose up when I put on my hat, and altogether my appearance with curled hair seemed much worse than before. My only salvation lay in an affectation of carelessness. Only in that way was my appearance tolerable.

Volódya seemed to be of the same opinion, for he asked me to brush out my curls; and when I had done so and was still not right, he did not look at me any more but was depressed and silent all the way to the Kornakóvs.

I entered their house boldly with Volódya; but when the princess asked me to dance, and I, for some reason, said that I did not dance—though my one idea on the way there had been to dance a great deal—I became abashed and, left among strangers, lapsed into my customary state of insuperable and ever-increasing shyness. I stood silently in one place the whole evening.

During a valse, one of the young princesses came up to me and, with the formal amiability common to the whole family, asked me why I was not dancing. I remember how the question alarmed me, yet how at the same time, quite involuntarily, a self-satisfied smile spread over my face and I began to utter, in most pompous French with many parentheses, such nonsense as I am still ashamed to remember a decade later. The music must have acted on me, exciting my nerves and, as I imagined, drowning the not very intelligible portion of my remarks. I said something about the highest society, about men's inanity and that of women, and at last I talked such nonsense that I stopped in the middle of a word, in some sentence it was quite impossible to complete.

Even the princess with her innate social tact, became confused and looked at me reproachfully. I was smiling. At that critical moment Volódya who had noticed that I was speaking warmly, and probably wished to learn how I was making up in conversation for not dancing, came up to us with Dubkóv. When he saw my smiling face and the princess's frightened air and heard the terrible stuff with which I concluded, he reddened and turned away. The princess rose and left me. I went on smiling, but suffered so much from the consciousness of my folly that I was ready to sink through the floor and felt the necessity at any price of moving and saying something in order somehow to change my position. I went up to Dubkóv and asked whether he had danced many valse with *her*. By this I intended to show myself playful and gay, but in reality was begging help from that very Dubkóv at whom I had shouted 'Silence!' at the dinner in Yar's restaurant. Dubkóv pretended not to hear me and turned away. I moved towards Volódya and with a great effort, again trying to assume a playful tone, said: 'Well, Volódya, tired out?' But Volódya looked at me as if to say: 'You don't talk to me like that when we are alone,' and went silently away, evidently afraid that I should hang on to him.

'Oh, God, my brother also deserts me!' I thought.

Still for some reason I had not the strength to go away. I stayed to the end, standing morosely in one place, and only when everybody was leaving and crowding into the anteroom, and the footman in helping me on with my overcoat caught the side of my hat so that it tilted up, did I laugh in a sickly way through tears, and without addressing any one in particular, remarked: '*Comme c'est gracieux!*'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> How graceful that is!

## THE CAROUSAL

THOUGH, under the influence of Dmítri, I had not yet taken up the ordinary student amusements called *carousals*, it happened that I took part in one that winter and carried away a not altogether pleasant impression. This is what occurred.

At a lecture at the beginning of the year, Baron Z., a tall, fair-haired young man with a very serious expression on his regular features, invited us all to a comrades' evening. 'All' of course meant all the first-year students who were more or less *comme il faut*; among whom, naturally, neither Grap, Semënov, Opérov, nor any of that rather poor lot, were included. Volódya smiled contemptuously when he heard that I was going to a carouse of first-year men; but I expected great and unusual pleasure from this, which was still to me a quite unknown pastime, and punctually at eight o'clock I reached Baron Z's.

Baron Z. with his coat unbuttoned over a white waistcoat, received his visitors in the brightly-lit ball-room and drawing-room of a small house in which his parents lived; they had let him have the reception-rooms for that evening's festivities. I caught sight of the dresses and heads of inquisitive maids in the passage, and once had a glimpse of the dress of a lady, whom I took to be the Baroness herself, in the pantry. There were about twenty guests, all students except Herr Frost, who had come with the Ívins, and a very rosy tall civilian who conducted the festivities and was introduced to every one as a relative of the Baron and a former student of Dorpat University. The over-bright illumination and the usual formal arrangement of the reception rooms had at first such a chilling effect on the youthful company that every one involuntarily kept to the walls, except a few bold

spirits, and the Dorpat student who, having already unbuttoned his waistcoat, seemed to be in both rooms at once and in every corner of each room, filling the whole apartment with his agreeable, resonant, and never-ceasing tenor voice. But the students either kept silent or modestly conversed about their professors, studies, examinations, and serious and interesting subjects in general. All without exception kept glancing at the pantry door and, though they tried to conceal it, their looks seemed to say: 'Well, isn't it time to begin?' I too felt it was time to begin, and expected *the beginning* with impatient joy.

After tea, which was served to the visitors by footmen, the Dorpat student asked Frost in Russian:

'Can you make punch, Frost?'

'O ja!' <sup>1</sup> Frost answered, wriggling his calves, but the Dorpat student said, again in Russian:

'Well then, take it in hand,' (as ex-fellow-students at the Dorpat University they were familiar with one another); and Frost, with big strides of his muscular legs, began moving backwards and forwards from drawing-room to pantry, and from pantry to drawing-room, and soon a large soup-tureen appeared on the table with a ten-pound sugar-loaf poised above it on three crossed students' swords. Baron Z. meanwhile kept approaching all the visitors, who had assembled in the drawing-room looking at the soup-tureen, and with unalterably serious face said to each one almost in the same words: 'Let us all pass the glass round student-fashion, and drink *Bruderschaft*,<sup>2</sup> without it there is no comradeship at all in our set. But unbutton your coats, or take them off altogether as he has done!' The Dorpat student had, in fact, taken

<sup>1</sup> German for 'Oh, yes'.

<sup>2</sup> To drink *Bruderschaft* (Brotherhood) is a German custom. They drink with arms interlinked and afterwards address each other in the second person singular, a sign of intimacy.

off his coat and, with his white shirt-sleeves turned up above his elbows, and his legs spread resolutely apart, was already setting fire to the rum in the soup-tureen.

'Gentlemen, put out the lights!' he suddenly exclaimed, as loudly and commandingly as though we had all been shouting. But we were all silently gazing at the soup-tureen and the Dorpat student's shirt, and we all felt that the solemn moment had arrived.

'*Löschen sie die Lichter aus, Frost!*'<sup>1</sup> the Dorpat student shouted again, this time in German, probably having become too excited. Frost and all of us began putting out the lights. The room grew dark, only the white sleeves and the hands supporting the sugar-loaf on the swords were lit up by the bluish flame. The Dorpat student's loud tenor was no longer the only voice heard, for talking and laughter came from every corner of the room. Many took off their coats (especially those who had fine and quite clean shirts). I did the same, and realized that *it had begun*. Though nothing jolly had happened I was firmly convinced all the same that it would be capital when each of us had drunk a glass of the beverage that was being prepared.

The drink was ready. The Dorpat student, soiling the table considerably, filled the glasses and shouted: 'Now then, gentlemen, come along!' When each of us had taken one of the full, sticky tumblers, the Dorpat student and Frost began singing a German song in which the exclamation *juche!*<sup>2</sup> was frequently repeated. We all joined in discordantly, began to clink glasses, to shout something, to praise the punch, and with arms linked or not, began drinking the strong, sweet liquor. There was now nothing to wait for—the carouse was in full swing. I had already drunk a whole glass of punch; they refilled my glass. My temples were throbbing, the flame looked blood-

<sup>1</sup> Put out the lights.

<sup>2</sup> Hurrah!



red, every one around me was shouting and laughing, but still it not only did not seem gay but I was convinced that I and all the others were dull, and that for some reason or other we all merely thought it necessary to pretend that it was very jolly. The only one perhaps who did not pretend was the Dorpat student; he became ever redder and redder and seemed more than ever omnipresent, filling everybody's empty glass, and spilling more and more over the table which had become all sweet and sticky. I do not remember how events followed each other, but I remember that during that evening I was awfully fond of the Dorpat student and Frost and was learning the German song by heart and kissing them both on their sugary lips; I also remember that I hated the Dorpat student that same evening and wished to throw a chair at him, but restrained myself. I remember also that besides the feeling of disobedience in all my limbs that I had experienced on the day of the dinner at Yar's, my head so ached and swam that evening, that I felt terribly afraid I was going to die then and there; I also recollect that we all sat down on the floor—I don't know why—and swung our arms, pretending to row, and sang 'Adown the river, Mother Volga', and that I thought at the time that it was quite unnecessary to do so. I also remember lying on the floor and, wrestling gipsy-fashion with interlocked legs, twisting some one's neck and thinking that this would not have happened had he not been drunk. Then I remember we had supper and drank something else: that I repeatedly went outside to refresh myself, and my head felt cold, and that on leaving I noticed that it was terribly dark, that the step of my trap had become slanting and slippery, and that it was impossible to hold on to Kuzmá because he had become weak and swayed about like a rag. But above all I remember constantly feeling that evening, that I was behaving very stupidly, pre-

tending to feel very jolly 'and to be very fond of drinking a great deal and that I was not at all tipsy, and that I felt all the time that the others were also behaving very stupidly by pretending the same. It seemed to me that each of them separately was uncomfortable as I was, but imagining that only he had that uncomfortable feeling, each one considered himself bound to pretend to be merry in order not to infringe the general gaiety. Moreover, strange to say, I considered myself obliged to pretend, merely because three bottles of champagne at ten rubles each, and ten bottles of rum at four rubles each—which came to seventy rubles—had been poured into the soup-tureen, apart from the cost of the supper. I felt so convinced of this that at the lecture next day I was greatly surprised that my comrades who had been at Baron Z.'s party, not only were not ashamed to recall what they had done there, but spoke of it so that other students could hear. They said it had been a splendid carouse, that Dorpat students were fine fellows at that sort of thing, and that forty bottles of rum had been drunk by twenty men, and many had been left dead-drunk under the tables. I could not understand why they not only talked of it, but even told lies about themselves.

## XL

## FRIENDSHIP WITH THE NEKHLYÚDOVS

THAT winter I saw a great deal not only of Dmítri, who often came to our home, but also of his whole family with whom I had begun to grow intimate.

The Nekhlyúdovs—mother, aunt, and daughter—spent all their evenings at home, and the princess liked to have young people to visit her in the evening—men who, as she expressed it, could spend a whole

evening without cards or dancing. But probably such men were rare, for I who visited them nearly every evening, seldom met visitors there. I grew accustomed to the members of that family and to their various dispositions, formed a clear idea of their mutual relations, grew used to their rooms and furniture and when they had no visitors felt quite at ease except on those occasions when I was left alone in the room with Varya. It always seemed to me that she, not being a very pretty girl, would much like me to fall in love with her. But I began to get over this confusion too. She had such a natural appearance of its being all the same to her whether she spoke with me, with her brother, or with Lyubóv Sergéevna, that I got into the habit of regarding her simply as a person to whom one might express the pleasure one felt in her company, without shame and without danger. During the whole period of my acquaintance with her, she seemed to me sometimes very plain, or again not so bad looking, but I never even asked myself whether I was in love with her or not. I chanced sometimes to address myself to her, but more often I conversed with her by addressing my remarks to Lyubóv Sergéevna or to Dmítri in her presence, and this latter method pleased me very much. I took great pleasure in talking before her, in listening to her singing, and generally in knowing that she was in the room; but the thought of what my relations with Varya might be in the future, and dreams of sacrificing myself for my friend should he fall in love with my sister, now rarely entered my head. Even if they did occur, I felt contented with the present and unconsciously tried to drive away thoughts of the future.

Notwithstanding this intimacy, however, I still considered it my imperative duty to conceal from the whole Nekhlyúdob family, and especially from Varya, my real feelings and inclinations; and I tried to appear quite a different young man from what I

actually was, and such, indeed, as could not really have existed. I tried to appear passionate, went into raptures, exclaimed and made passionate gestures when I pretended to be particularly pleased with anything, and at the same time tried to seem indifferent to any unusual occurrence I witnessed or was told of. I tried to appear a cruel scoffer who held nothing sacred, and at the same time to be a subtle observer; I tried to appear logical in all my actions, precise and accurate in my life, and yet contemptuous of all material things. I can confidently assert that I was much better in reality than the strange creature I tried to represent myself as being; but even such as I pretended to be, the Nekhlyúdots got to like me, and happily for me they apparently saw through my pretence. Only Lyubóv Sergéevna, who regarded me as the greatest of egotists, an atheist and a mocker, seemed to dislike me, often disputed with me, grew angry, and baffled me by her abrupt and incoherent phrases. But Dmítri was still on the same strange and more than friendly relations with her, and said that nobody understood her and that she was doing him a great deal of good. His friendship for her still continued to be a grievance to the whole family.

Once Vára in discussing with me this strange bond which we none of us understood, explained it as follows:

'Dmítri is an egotist. He is too proud, and in spite of all his cleverness is very fond of praise and admiration. He loves to be always first, and *auntie* in the innocence of her heart, is in a state of admiration before him and has not sufficient tact to hide this admiration, so the result is that she flatters him not hypocritically but sincerely.'

I remembered this explanation, and afterwards on considering it could not help thinking that Vára was very intelligent, and consequently I gladly exalted her in my estimation. Such elevation on account of the

intelligence and other moral qualities I found in her, though it was made with pleasure, I kept within pretty severe limits of moderation, and I never went into raptures—the highest stage of such exaltation. Thus when Sophia Ivánovna, who was never tired of talking about her niece, told me how Vára when still a child, in the country four years before, had given away all her dresses and shoes to peasant children without permission, so that these things had to be taken back afterwards, I did not at once accept that fact as worthy of raising her in my opinion, but even made fun of her mentally for taking such an unpractical view of things.

When the Nekhlyúdovs had visitors, and sometimes Volódya and Dubkóv among others, I retired to the background, self-satisfied and with a quiet consciousness of power as a friend of the family: I did not talk, but only listened to what the others said. And all that they said seemed to me so incredibly foolish that I wondered how such a clever, logical woman as the princess, and all her logical family, could listen to such folly and reply to it. Had it then occurred to me to compare what the others said with what I myself said when I was alone there, I should certainly not have marvelled at all. Still less should I have marvelled had I believed that my people at home—Avdótya Vasílyevna, Lyúba and Kátya—were just like everybody else and not at all inferior to others, and if I had remembered that Dubkóv, Kátya, and Avdótya Vasílyevna talked and laughed with one another merrily for whole evenings; how Dubkóv, catching at some word, would almost always feelingly recite the verses: *Au banquet de la vie, infortuné convive . . .*<sup>1</sup> or extracts from *The Demon*<sup>2</sup>; and in general what nonsense they talked with great pleasure for several hours together.

<sup>1</sup> At the banquet of life, unfortunate guest.

<sup>2</sup> By Lérmontov.

Of course when they had visitors Vára paid less attention to me than when we were alone, and we then had neither the reading nor the music to which I was very fond of listening. When talking to the other visitors she lost what was for me her chief charm—her quiet reasonableness and simplicity. I remember how strangely her conversations with my brother Volódya about the theatre and the weather struck me. I knew that Volódya avoided and despised banality more than anything in the world, and Vára also always laughed at quasi-entertaining conversations about the weather, and so forth—then why when they met, did they always utter the most unendurable trivialities and seem to be ashamed of one another? Always after such conversations I felt silently enraged with Vára, and next day made fun of the visitors but felt more pleased than ever to be alone with the Nekhlyúdob family.

At all events I began to take greater pleasure in being with Dmítri in his mother's drawing-room than in being alone with him.

## XLI

### FRIENDSHIP WITH NEKHLÝÚDOV

Just then my friendship with Dmítri hung by a hair. I had begun to criticize him too long ago not to see failings in him, and in early youth we only love passionately, and therefore only perfect people. But as soon as the mist of passion begins gradually to dissolve, or the clear rays of common sense begin to pierce it, and we see the object of our passion in his true aspect with merits and defects, the defects alone, being unexpected, strike us clearly and exaggeratedly; the feeling of attraction for what is new and the hope that perfection in some one else is not an impossibility, incites us not only to coldness towards the former

object of our passion but even to be repelled by him, and we desert him without regret and hasten on to seek some other perfection. If this did not happen to me in regard to Dmítri I owe it only to his stubborn, pedantic attachment—rather than to an attachment of the heart—which it would have been too shameful to be false to. Besides that, our strange rule of frankness bound us together. We were too much afraid if we parted of leaving in each other's power moral secrets we had confessed to one another and were ashamed of. That rule of frankness had however long been unobserved, as we were well aware, but it often embarrassed us and occasioned strange relations between us.

Almost every time I came to see Dmítri that winter I found Bezobédov there, a fellow-student with whom he studied. Bezobédov was a small, thin, pock-marked man, with tiny freckled hands and a great mass of unkempt red hair; he was always ragged, dirty, uneducated, and he even studied badly. Dmítri's relations with him, as with Lyúbov Sergéevna, were incomprehensible to me. The sole reason he could have chosen him from among all his fellow-students and become intimate with him, was that there was no worse-looking man in the university than Bezobédov. But just for that reason, probably, it pleased Dmítri to evince friendship for him in despite of everybody. His whole intercourse with that student expressed the proud feeling: 'There, you see, it is all the same to me who you are—to me all are equal—I like him and that means he is all right!'

I wondered that he did not find it hard always to put constraint on himself, and how the unfortunate Bezobédov endured his awkward situation. I much disliked this friendship.

One evening I came to Dmítri intending to spend the evening with him in his mother's drawing-room, in conversation and hearing Vára sing or read. But

Bezobédov was sitting with him upstairs, and Dmítri told me in a sharp tone that he could not come downstairs because, as I saw, he had a visitor.

‘And what pleasure is there there?’ he added. ‘Much better stay here and chat.’

Though the idea of sitting with Bezobédov for a couple of hours did not at all attract me, I could not make up my mind to go to the drawing-room alone; and vexed at my friend’s eccentricity, I seated myself in a rocking-chair and began to rock in silence. I was very much annoyed with Dmítri and with Bezobédov for depriving me of the pleasure of being downstairs, I waited to see whether Bezobédov would not soon go away, and I was angry with him and with Dmítri while silently listening to their conversation. ‘A very pleasant visitor, sit with him!’ I thought, when the footman brought tea and Dmítri had to ask Bezobédov five times to take a glass, because the timid visitor thought it his duty to refuse the first and second glasses of tea and to say, ‘Have some yourself.’ Dmítri, with an evident effort, engaged his visitor in conversation, into which he vainly tried repeatedly to draw me. I remained morosely silent.

‘It’s no good putting on a face as if to say, “let no one dare to suspect that I am dull”!’ I mentally said to Dmítri, as I silently and rhythmically rocked my chair and with a certain feeling of pleasure fanned the flame of enmity to my friend more and more. ‘There’s a fool!’ I thought. ‘He might spend the evening pleasantly with his delightful family, but no, he sits with this beast, and the time is passing and it will be too late to go to the drawing-room,’ and I glanced at my friend from behind the edge of my chair. His hand, his pose, his neck (especially the nape of it), and his knees, seemed so repulsive and offensive to me that I could at that moment with pleasure have done something even seriously unpleasant to him.



At last Bezobédov got up, but Dmítri could not at once part from so pleasant a visitor; he asked him to stay the night, but Bezobédov fortunately did not assent, and departed.

After seeing him off, Dmítri returned, smiling slightly with self-satisfaction and rubbing his hands—probably because he had maintained his character, and because he had at last escaped from boredom. He began pacing the room, from time to time glancing at me. He seemed yet more repulsive to me. ‘How dare he walk about and smile?’ thought I.

‘Why are you angry?’ he suddenly asked, stopping in front of me.

‘I am not angry at all,’ I replied, as one always does in such cases; ‘it only vexed me that you dissimulate to me and to Bezobédov and to yourself.’

‘What nonsense! I never dissimulate to any one.’

‘I have not forgotten our rule of frankness and I speak openly to you. I am certain you can’t bear that Bezobédov,’ said I, ‘just as I can’t, because he is stupid and heaven only knows what, but you like to parade your importance before him.’

‘No! And in the first place, Bezobédov is an admirable man . . .’

‘But I say “yes”! I will even tell you that your friendship with Lyubóv Sergéevna is also based on the fact that she regards you as a god.’

‘No, I tell you!’

‘I tell you “yes”; because I know by my own case,’ I said with the warmth of repressed vexation and wishing to disarm him by my frankness. ‘I have told you and tell you again, that I always imagine that I like those who say pleasant things to me, but when I examine the matter well I find that there is no real attachment.’

‘No,’ Dmítri continued, adjusting his neckerchief with an angry movement of his neck, ‘when I love, neither praise nor blame can change my feeling.’

'That's not true. You know I told you that when papa called me a good-for-nothing, I hated him for a while, and wished him to die, just as you . . .'

'Speak for yourself! It is a great pity if you are such a . . .'

'On the contrary,' I cried, jumping up from the chair and looking him in the eyes with desperate courage—'what you say is wrong; didn't you tell me about my brother? I won't remind you of that, because that would be dishonourable,—did not you tell . . . but I will tell you how I understand you now . . .'

And trying to sting him even more painfully than he had stung me, I began to prove to him that he did not love any one; and to tell him everything with which I thought I had a right to reproach him. I was very pleased to have told him everything, quite forgetting that the only possible aim in doing this—that he might confess the shortcomings of which I accused him—could not be attained at that moment, while he was excited. In a quiet state when he might have acknowledged it, I had never spoken so to him.

The dispute was already passing into a quarrel when Dmitri suddenly became silent and went away into another room. I wanted to follow him and went on speaking, but he did not answer. I knew that bursts of anger were set down in his list of vices, and that he was now trying to master himself. I cursed all his written rules.

So that was what our rule: *to tell each other all that we felt and never to say anything about one another to any one else*, had brought us to. Carried away by frankness, we had sometimes gone so far as to make quite shameless confessions, describing (to our shame) suppositions and fancies as wishes and feelings, as, for example, what I had just said to him; and these confessions had not only failed to draw closer the bonds between us, but had dried up the feeling itself and

disunited us. And now, suddenly, his self-esteem did not allow him to make the most trivial admission and in the heat of our dispute we employed the weapons with which we had previously supplied one another, and which wounded us terribly.

## XLII

## OUR STEPMOTHER

THOUGH papa had not intended to come to Moscow with his wife before the New Year, he arrived in autumn while there was excellent hunting still to be had with the dogs. He said he had changed his plans because his case had to be heard in the Senate; but Mimí told us that Avdótya Vasílyevna had found it so dull in the country, had so often spoken about Moscow, and had made such a pretence of being ill, that papa had decided to comply with her wish.

'For she never loved him, but only buzzed into everybody's ears about her love, wishing to marry a rich man,' Mimí added, sighing pensively as if to say: 'It's not what *some people* would have done for him had he been able to appreciate them.'

*Some people* were unjust to Avdótya Vasílyevna, her love for papa—passionate, devoted, self-sacrificing love—showed itself in every word, look, and motion of hers. But such love did not in the least prevent her, together with a desire not to be parted from her adored husband, from wanting a remarkable head-dress from Mme. Annette, a bonnet with an extraordinary blue ostrich feather, and a blue gown of Venetian velvet which should artfully disclose her fine white bosom and arms, that till then no one but her husband and her maids had seen. Kátya sided with her mother of course, while between our step-mother and ourselves strange jesting relations had

become established from the very day of her arrival. Directly she got out of the carriage, Volódyá, putting on a serious face and with dull eyes, went up to kiss her hand, swaying from side to side, bowing and clicking his heels, and as if introducing some one, said:

‘I have the honour to congratulate dear mama on her arrival, and to kiss her hand.’

‘Ah, dear sonny!’ said Avdótya Vasílyevna, with her beautiful expressionless smile.

‘And don’t forget the second sonny!’ said I, also approaching to kiss her hand and involuntarily trying to assume Volódyá’s expression of face and voice.

If we and our stepmother had been sure of mutual attachment this expression might have indicated our contempt for demonstrative displays of affection; had we already been ill-disposed to one another it might have indicated irony, or contempt for pretence, or a wish to conceal our real relations from our father who was present, and many other thoughts and feelings; but in the present case this expression, which quite accorded with Avdótya Vasílyevna’s spirit, indicated nothing at all and only concealed the absence of any relations. Since that time I have often observed such false bantering unreal relations among the members of other families when they felt that their real relations would not be quite satisfactory; and such relations involuntarily established themselves between Avdótya Vasílyevna and us. We hardly ever departed from them; we were always artificially polite to her, spoke French, clicked our heels when we bowed, and called her *chère maman*, to which she always replied with jests in the same style, and with her beautiful monotonous smile. Only tearful Lyúba, with her crooked legs and innocent chatter, took a liking to her stepmother and very naively, and sometimes awkwardly, tried to bring her closer in touch with our whole family; and so the only person in the world for whom—apart from her passionate love

for papa—Avdótya Vasílyevna had a scrap of affection was Lyúba. She even exhibited a kind of ecstatic wonder and a timid respect for her which greatly amazed me.

At first Avdótya Vasílyevna, while speaking of herself as a stepmother liked often to hint at the fact that children and other members of a household always look wrongly and unjustly on a stepmother and so make her position difficult. Yet foreseeing all the unpleasantness of such a position, she did nothing to avoid it by a caress here, a gift there, or by avoiding grumbling, which would have been quite easy for her since she was not exacting by nature and was very amiable. And not only did she fail to do this, but on the contrary, foreseeing all the unpleasantness of her situation, she prepared for defence in the absence of any attack; and anticipating that the whole household wished by all means to make things disagreeable for her and to offend her, she saw evil intention in everything and considered it most dignified to suffer in silence; and as by her inactivity she enlisted no affection, she naturally enlisted ill-will. Moreover she was so lacking in the capacity—developed to the highest degree in our family—of *understanding*, to which I have already alluded, and her habits were so contrary to those rooted in our household, that this alone prejudiced us against her. In our neat well-ordered house she always lived as if she had but just arrived: she got up and retired now early now late, at one time she came out to dinner and another time did not, sometimes she had supper and sometimes not. Almost always when there were no visitors she went about half-dressed, and she was not ashamed to show herself before us, or even before the servants, in a white petticoat with a shawl thrown round her and with bare arms. At first I liked this simplicity, but afterwards, and very soon, as a result of it I lost any respect I had for her. Still more strange did it seem

to us that there were two quite different women in her according to whether there were visitors or not: one, in the presence of guests, was a healthy, cold, young beauty, sumptuously dressed, neither clever nor silly, but cheerful; the other, in the absence of guests, was a woman no longer young, worn out, sad, slovenly, and bored, though affectionate. Often looking at her when she returned smiling from a call, her cheeks flushed by the winter cold, happy in the consciousness of her beauty, and when taking off her bonnet she went up to the mirror to look at herself, or when rustling her rich low-necked ball-dress, abashed and yet proud before the servants, she went to her carriage; or when at home we had a small party, and she, in a high-necked silk gown with some fine lace round her delicate throat, shed her monotonous but beautiful smile all around, I wondered what those who were in raptures about her would say if they saw her, as I had seen her on evenings when she remained at home, wearing some kind of dressing-gown and with unkempt hair, waiting till after midnight for her husband's return from the club, and pacing the dimly-lit rooms like a shadow. Now she would go to the piano and, frowning with the effort, play the one valse she knew, now take up a novel and, after reading a few lines from the middle, throw it down again; then, not to arouse the servants, would herself go to the pantry, get a cucumber and some cold veal and eat them standing by the pantry window, and then, tired and depressed, would again wander aimlessly from room to room. But what alienated us from her most of all was her want of understanding, chiefly shown by her characteristically condescending attention when people spoke to her about things she did not understand. She was not to blame for having acquired an unconscious habit of smiling slightly with her lips only and bending her head when told things that did not much interest her

(and except herself and her husband nothing did interest her); but this oft-repeated smile and inclination of the head were intolerably repellent. Her gaiety, as if laughing at herself, at you, and at the whole world, was also awkward and did not communicate itself to any one, her sensibility was too artificial. Above all, she was not ashamed continually to talk to every one of her love for papa. Though she did not lie at all when she said that her whole life consisted in her love for her husband, and though she proved this by her whole life, yet as we saw it, such unabashed, continual assertion of her love was disgusting, and we were even more ashamed when she spoke like that before strangers, than when she made blunders in French.

She loved her husband more than anything in the world, and he loved her—especially at first and when he saw that she pleased others besides himself. Her one aim in life was to acquire her husband's love, yet as if on purpose she seemed to do everything that could be unpleasant to him, and all this with the object of proving to him the strength of her love and her readiness to sacrifice herself.

She loved finery; papa liked to see her as a beauty in society, evoking praise and admiration; yet she sacrificed her love of fine clothes for papa and got more and more into the habit of sitting at home in a grey blouse. Papa, always considering freedom and equality indispensable conditions in family intercourse, hoped that his darling Lyúba and his kind young wife would be joined in sincere friendship; but Avdótya Vasilyevna sacrificed herself, and considered it necessary to treat the *real mistress of the house*, as she called Lyúba, with unsuitable respect which painfully offended him. He gambled a great deal that winter, and towards the end lost much, but as usual not wishing to mix his play with his family life, he concealed his gaming affairs from all the household.

Avdótya Vasilyevna sacrificed herself, and when ill (and towards the end of the winter even when pregnant) considered it her duty to go waddling in her grey blouse, with her hair in disorder, to meet papa at four or five in the morning, when weary and ashamed, after losing at cards, he returned, having remained at the club till the eighth fine had been exacted. She would ask him absentmindedly whether he had been lucky at play, and with condescending attention smiled and shook her head while she listened to what he told her of his doings at the club and begged her, for the hundredth time, never to sit up for him. But although his losses and gains—on which at the rate he played all papa's resources depended—did not interest her at all, she was the first to meet him every night when he returned from the club. To these encounters however, besides her passion for self-sacrifice, she was urged by secret jealousy, from which she suffered in the highest degree. No one on earth could have persuaded her that papa returned late from the club and not from some mistress. She tried to read his love-secrets in his face and, reading nothing, sighed with a certain luxury of grief and gave herself up to the contemplation of her unhappiness.

In consequence of these and many other incessant sacrifices, during the last months of that winter—in which he had lost heavily and was therefore generally in bad spirits—an intermittent feeling of silent hatred began to be noticeable in papa's intercourse with his wife: that suppressed repugnance to the object of one's affections which expresses itself in an unconscious endeavour to inflict on that object every kind of petty moral unpleasantness.



## XLIII

## NEW COMRADES

THE winter passed unperceived, the thaw had already set in again and the list of examinations had already been nailed up in the university, when I suddenly remembered that I should be examined in eighteen subjects, on which I had attended lectures I had not listened to or taken any notes of or prepared a single one. It is strange that so simple a question as that of how I was to pass my examinations had not once occurred to me. But I had been all winter in such a mist, arising from my delight at being grown-up and being *comme il faut*, that the question of: How I was to pass my examinations? did not enter my head. I compared myself with my fellow-students and thought: "They will be examined but most of them are not even *comme il faut*, so I have an extra advantage over them and I must pass." I went to the lectures only because it had become a habit and because papa sent me out of the house. Besides, I had many acquaintances and often enjoyed myself at the university. I liked the noise, the voices, the laughter, in the auditorium; I liked to sit on a back bench during a lecture dreaming of something to the monotonous voice of the professor, and to observe my comrades. I liked to run out with some one to Materne's to drink some vodka and have a snack, and knowing that I might be brought to book for it, to enter the auditorium after the professor, opening the creaking door timidly; I liked to take a hand in practical jokes when students of all the faculties crowded laughing in the corridor. All this was very jolly.

When everybody had begun to attend the lectures more regularly, and the professor of physics had finished his course and taken leave till the examina-

tions, the students began collecting their note-books and preparing in groups for the examinations. I too thought I ought to prepare myself. Opérov, with whom I still exchanged greetings but was on the coldest terms, as I have already mentioned not only offered me his note-books but invited me to prepare myself by them with him and some other students. I thanked him and accepted, hoping by this honour to efface my former misunderstanding with him, only asking him that they should all be sure always to meet at my house, as I had good rooms.

I was told that they would study in turn now at one house and now at another, according to its nearness. The first time we met at Zúkhin's. It was a small room behind a partition, in a large house on the Trubnóy Boulevard. I was late the first day and came in when they had already begun the reading. The little room was full of tobacco smoke, and not good tobacco, but the coarse brand Zúkhin smoked. There was a square bottle of vodka on the table, a wineglass, bread, salt, and a mutton-bone.

Zúkhin, without rising, asked me to have a glass of vodka and to take off my coat.

'I think you are not accustomed to such refreshments?' he added.

They were all wearing dirty print shirts and false shirt-fronts. Trying not to show my contempt for them, I took off my coat and lay down on the sofa with an air of comradeship. Zúkhin, occasionally referring to the note-books, was speaking; the others stopped him to ask questions and he explained concisely, intelligently, and accurately. I began to listen, and as there was much I did not understand because I did not know what had gone before, I put a question.

'Eh, old fellow, it's no good your listening if you don't know that,' said Zúkhin. 'I will let you have my note-books. You look them through

by to-morrow, or what's the use of explaining to you?"

I felt ashamed of my ignorance, and feeling also the justice of Zúkhin's remark, left off listening and occupied myself by observing my new comrades. According to the classification of people into the *comme il faut* and the not *comme il faut*, they evidently belonged to the latter division and consequently evoked in me not only a feeling of contempt but a certain personal dislike, which I experienced towards them because, without being *comme il faut*, they not only seemed to regard me as an equal, but even patronized me in a good-natured way. This feeling was aroused in me by their feet, their dirty hands with closely bitten nails (and one long nail on Opérov's little finger), their pink shirts and false shirt-fronts, the words of abuse they affectionately addressed to one another, the dirty room, and Zúkhin's habit of constantly blowing his nose a little while pressing one nostril with his finger, and especially by their way of speaking, employing and accenting certain words. For instance, they used the word *blockhead* instead of fool, *literally* instead of exactly, *splendid* instead of beautiful, and so on, which seemed to me bookish and disgustingly ill-bred. But the way they accented some Russian and especially some foreign words, aroused my *comme il faut* antagonism yet more: they said *máchine* instead of machine, *áctivity* instead of activity, *ón purpose* instead of on púrpose, *mantél-shelf* instead of mantelshelf, *Shákespeare* instead of Shakespéare,<sup>1</sup> and so on.

In spite however of these externals, which were irrepressibly repellent to me at that time, I had a presentiment of something good in these people, and envying the cheerful comradeship which united them, I felt drawn to them and wanted to get into

<sup>1</sup> In Russian Shakespeare is pronounced with the accent on the last syllable, as in French.

closer touch with them, difficult to me as it was to do so.

I already knew the gentle and honest Opérov, and now the spirited and remarkably clever Zúkhin, who was evidently first in that circle, attracted me very much. He was a short, sturdy, dark-complexioned man, with a rather puffy and always shiny but extremely intelligent lively and independent face. He owed that expression chiefly to his forehead, which though not high was prominent above his deep-set black eyes, and to his short bristly hair and thick black beard, which seemed never to be shaved. He seemed not to think of himself (which always particularly pleased me in people), but it was evident that his mind was never idle. His was one of those expressive countenances which some hours after you first see them appear to you quite different. This happened to me with Zúkhin's face towards the end of the evening. Suddenly new wrinkles appeared on his face, his eyes sank deeper, his smile became different, and his whole face changed so that I should hardly have recognized him.

When they had finished reading, Zúkhin, the other students, and I—to show a readiness to be their comrade—drank a glass of vodka apiece, and there was hardly any left in the bottle. Zúkhin asked if any one had a quarter-rouble, that the old woman who served him might be sent for more vodka. I offered my money, but Zúkhin, as if not hearing me, turned to Opérov, and Opérov drew out a beaded purse and gave him what he had asked for.

'Mind and don't start drinking!' said Opérov, who did not drink at all himself.

'No fear,' answered Zúkhin, sucking the marrow out of the mutton-bone (I remember thinking at the time: 'He is so clever because he eats so much marrow.') 'No fear,' he went on with a slight smile, and his smile was such that one could not help noticing

it, and felt grateful to him for it. 'Even if I do start drinking it won't be a misfortune. We shall see now who will get the best of it—he of me, or I of him. . . . Everything is ready,' he added, boastfully, tapping his forehead. 'If only Semenov does not slip up—he seems to have been drinking hard.'

In fact, that same grey-haired Semenov, who at the first examination had cheered me by having a worse appearance than I, and who afterwards came out second in the entrance-examination, had attended the lectures regularly during the first month of the course, had begun going on the spree before the repetitions began, and towards the end of the course had not shown himself at the university at all.

'Where is he?' some one asked.

'I have lost sight of him,' Zúkhin continued: 'the last time I was with him, we smashed "Lisbon".<sup>1</sup> It was a capital affair! They say there was a row afterwards. . . . What a head! What fire there is in that man! What a brain! It will be a pity if he goes to pieces. And he certainly will: he is not the sort of lad to stick it in the university, with his impulsive nature!'

After talking for a while longer every one began to go, having agreed to meet again at Zúkhin's on the following days because his quarters were nearest to all the others. When we came out I felt rather conscience-stricken to be the only one driving while every one else was walking, and feeling ashamed, I offered Opérov a lift. Zúkhin came out at the same time, and having borrowed a rouble from Opérov went off to spend the whole night somewhere. On the way, Opérov told me a good deal about Zúkhin's character and way of life, and when I reached home I could not fall asleep for a long time, thinking of these new people I had got to know. I lay awake a long while

<sup>1</sup> 'Lisbon' is mentioned again later and was evidently a restaurant of some sort.

vacillating between respect for them—to which their knowledge, simplicity, honesty, and the poetry of youth and daring, inclined me, on the one side, and on the other, their unseemly exterior which repelled me. Despite my wish to do so, it was literally impossible for me at that time to become intimate with them. Our understanding of things was so entirely different. There were an infinitude of shades constituting for me the whole charm and meaning of life that were quite incomprehensible to them, and vice versa. But what chiefly made intimacy impossible was my having a coat of twenty-ruble cloth, a droshki, and a cambric shirt. This had particular weight with me; I always felt that I involuntarily offended them by the indications of my prosperity. I felt guilty towards them and sometimes humbled myself, then feeling indignant at my undeserved humiliation, passed over to self-confidence and I was quite unable to enter into equal, sincere relations with them. The coarse, vicious side of Zúkhin's character was for me at that time so overpowered by the strength of the poetry of daring in him of which I had a presentiment, that it did not affect me at all unpleasantly.

For about a fortnight I went almost every evening to study at Zúkhin's. I studied very little, for as I have already said I had fallen behind my comrades, and not having the strength to study by myself in order to catch them up I only pretended to listen and to understand what they read. I think the others guessed that I was pretending, and I often noticed that they skipped things that they knew themselves, and never asked me.

From day to day I more and more excused the disorderliness of that circle, feeling drawn to it and finding much that was poetic in it. It was only my word of honour given to Dmítri never to go on the spree with them, that kept me from wanting to share their amusements.

Once I wished to brag to them about my knowledge of literature, especially French literature, and I led the conversation to that subject. To my surprise it turned out that though they pronounced the titles with a Russian accent, they had read a great deal more than I, and knew and appreciated English and even Spanish writers, and Le Sage of whom I had not even heard. Púshkin and Zukóvski were literature to them—and not, as to me, books in yellow bindings which I had read and learnt as a child. They despised Dumas, Sue, and Féval alike, and they—especially Zúkhin—had a much better and clearer judgement of literature than I, as I could not but acknowledge. In my knowledge of music I also had no advantage over them. To my yet greater surprise Opérov played the violin, another of the students who studied with us played the violoncello and the piano, and they both played in the university orchestra, knew music very well, and appreciated what was good. In a word, except the pronunciation of French and German, they knew better than I everything I had wished to boast about before them, and without being at all proud of it. I might, in my position, have boasted of my good-breeding, but, unlike Volódyá, I did not possess it. What then was the eminence from which I looked down on them? My acquaintance with Prince Iván? My French pronunciation? my droshki, my cambric shirt, and my finger-nails? Was not all this nonsense after all?—began dimly to enter my head under the influence of my feeling of envy of the comradeship and good-natured youthful mirth which I saw before me. They were all intimate with one another. The simplicity of their intercourse went to the length of rudeness, but under this external rudeness one always noticed a fear of hurting each other in the least. *Scoundrel* and *pig*, used by them affectionately, jarred only on me and gave me cause for silent ridicule, but these words did not offend them

or prevent their being on a most sincere and friendly footing with one another. In their treatment of each other they were careful and delicate as only very poor and very young people are. Above all I felt something broad and daring in Zúkhin's character and exploits at the 'Lisbon'. I felt that these carousals must be something quite different from the make-believe with burnt rum and champagne in which I had taken part at Baron Z.'s.

## XLIV

## ZÚKHIN AND SEMËNOV

I DON'T know to what category Zúkhin belonged; but I know that he had been in the S. High School, had no means, and did not I think belong to the gentry. He was about eighteen at that time though he looked much older. He was remarkably clever and particularly quick-witted: it was easier for him to grasp the whole of a complex subject and foresee all its parts and deductions than consciously to consider the laws from which these deductions are made. He knew he was clever and was proud of it, and as a consequence of that pride was equally simple and good natured in his relations with everybody. He had probably experienced a great deal in his life. His fiery and receptive nature had already found time to have experience of love, and friendship, and business, and money. There was nothing which when he had once experienced it, though in a small degree and in the lowest social strata, he did not despise or did not regard with a kind of indifference or inattention as a result of the ease with which he had attained it. He seemed to take up everything new with such ardour only in order, having reached his aim, to despise what he had gained, and his gifted nature always enabled him to attain his object and the right



to despise it. In relation to science it was just the same: without much study and without taking notes, he knew mathematics excellently and was not boasting when he said he would baffle the professor. He thought there was much nonsense in the lectures he heard, but with the *unconscious practical roguery* of his nature he immediately adapted himself to what the professor required; and all the professors liked him. He was outspoken in his relations with the authorities, but the authorities respected him. He not only did not respect and did not care for learning, but even despised those who were seriously occupied with what came to him so easily. Study, as he understood it, did not occupy one-tenth of his capacity. His life as a student did not offer anything to which he could devote himself wholly, and his fiery active nature demanded life, as he phrased it, and he threw himself into dissipation of a kind such as his means allowed, and gave himself up to it ardently and with a wish to spend himself ('to the limits of my strength'). Now, just before the examinations, Opérov's remark was justified. Zúkhin disappeared for a couple of weeks, so that latterly we carried on our preparations at another student's room. But at the first examination he appeared in the hall, pale, haggard, with trembling hands, and passed the examinations brilliantly to enter the second course.

At the beginning of the term there were some eight men in the company of carousers of whom Zúkhin was the head. Ikónin and Seménov were among the number at first, but the former left that group because he could not stand the frantic debauch to which they gave themselves up at the beginning of the year, and the latter because even that seemed insufficient to him. At first all the men of our class looked upon them, and related their exploits to one another, with a kind of horror.

The chief heroes of these exploits were Zúkhin and,

towards the end of term, Semenov. Towards the end Semënov particularly was regarded with a feeling of terror by every one, and when he attended a lecture, which he seldom did, there was a sensation in the auditorium. Just before the examinations Semënov finished his career of dissipation in a most energetic and original manner, of which, thanks to my acquaintance with Zúkhin, I was a witness. This is what happened. One evening, just when we had assembled at Zúkhin's, and Opérov—having placed beside him, in addition to the tallow candle in a candlestick, another in a bottle—began in his thin little voice, with his head bent over his note-books, to read his minutely-written notes on physics, the landlady came into the room and informed Zúkhin that some one had come with a note for him. . . . [Druzhinin's remark quoted on p. 174 of the *Life of Tolstoy* in this edition explains the abrupt ending of this chapter.]

## XLV

### I FAIL.

AT length the first examination, in differential and integral calculus, had arrived. I was in a strange state of fog and had no clear conception of what awaited me. In the evenings after I had been in the company of Zúkhin and the other comrades, the idea came to me that I ought to change something in my convictions—that there was something about them that was not the thing, and not what it should be; but in the mornings, when the sun shone, I again became *comme il faut*, was very pleased with this, and did not desire any alterations in myself.

It was in this frame of mind that I came to the first examination.

I sat down on a bench on the side where the princes,

counts and barons were sitting, and began talking to them in French, and strange to say the thought never occurred to me that I should presently have to answer questions on a subject I knew nothing about. I looked coolly at those who went up to be examined, and even allowed myself to make fun of some of them.

'Well, Grap,' I said to Ílinka, 'had your fill of fright?'

'We'll see how you come out!' said Ílinka, who since he entered the university had quite rebelled against my influence, did not smile when I spoke to him, and was ill-disposed towards me.

I smiled disdainfully at Ílinka's answer, though the doubt he expressed alarmed me for a moment. But the fog again spread over that feeling and I continued to be absent-minded and indifferent; so much so that I promised Baron Z. to go to have a snack at Materne's with him immediately after being examined, as though to me that was a most trifling matter. When I was called up together with Ikónin, I arranged the skirts of my uniform and went very calmly up to the examiner's table.

A slight shiver ran down my back only when a young professor—the same one who had examined me at my entrance examination—looked me straight in the face and I touched the note-paper on which the questions were written. Ikónin, though he had drawn a question with a sway of his whole body as he had done at the former examinations, gave some sort of answer though very badly, but I did what he had done at the former examination, and even worse, for I drew a second question and gave no answer to that either. The professor looked pityingly into my face and said in a quiet but firm voice:

'You will not pass into the next class, Mr. Irtényev. You had better not come up for examination. We must weed out this faculty. Nor you either, Mr. Ikónin,' he added

Ikónin, as if asking for alms, begged permission to be re-examined, but the professor replied that he would not be able to do in a couple of days what he had not done in the course of a year, and that he should certainly not pass. Ikónin again implored him piteously, humbly, but the professor again refused.

'You may go, gentlemen,' he said in the same low but firm tone.

Only then did I make up my mind to leave the table, and I felt ashamed of having seemed to be, by my silent presence, a party to Ikónin's humiliating entreaties. I don't remember how I traversed the hall past the students, what I replied to their questions, how I went out into the vestibule, nor how I reached home! I was aggrieved, humiliated, and truly wretched.

For three days I did not leave my room, saw nobody and, as in childhood, found solace in tears, and wept much. I looked for pistols with which I could shoot myself should I very much want to. I thought that Ílinka Grap would spit in my face when he met me and would act rightly in doing so; that Opérov was rejoicing at my misfortune and was telling everybody about it; that Kólpikov had been quite right when he put me to shame at Yar's, that my stupid speeches to Princess Kornakóva could have had no other result, and so on, and so on. All the depressing moments of my life, painful to my vanity, passed through my mind one after another; I tried to blame some one else for my misfortune—thought that some one had done it on purpose, imagined a whole intrigue against myself, grumbled at the professors, at my comrades, at Volódya, at Dmítri, at papa for having sent me to the university, and murmured at Providence for having allowed me to live to encounter such disgrace. At last, feeling that I was completely undone in the eyes of all who knew me, I begged papa to let

me join the hussars or go to the Caucasus. Papa was dissatisfied with me, but seeing my terrible grief he tried to comfort me, saying that, bad as it was, the matter might still be mended by my exchanging to another faculty. Volódya, who also saw nothing terrible in my misfortune, said that in another faculty I should at least not have to feel ashamed before my new class-mates.

Our ladies did not, and did not wish to, or could not, at all understand what an examination meant and what not passing meant, and only pitied me because they saw my grief.

Dmítri came to see me every day and was very gentle and mild all the time; but just this made it seem to me that he had grown colder towards me. It always seemed painful and offensive when he came upstairs and sat down silently close to me with a look rather like that of a doctor who seats himself beside a dangerously sick patient. Sophia Ivánovna and Várya, through him, sent me books which I had previously wanted, and they wished me to go to see them; but just in those very attentions I thought I perceived a proud and insulting condescension towards one who had now fallen so very low. After three days I grew a little calmer, but up to our departure for the country I did not leave the house but wandered idly from room to room, always brooding over my sorrow and trying to evade all the people of the household.

I thought and thought, and at last late one evening, as I was sitting downstairs all alone listening to Avdótya Vasilyevna's valse, I suddenly sprang up, ran upstairs, took out the note-book on which was written: 'Rules of Life', opened it—and a moment of repentance and moral expansion came over me. I wept, but no longer tears of despair. On recovering, I resolved to write down rules of life again, and was firmly convinced that I should never do anything bad

again, never spend a moment idly, and never go back on my rules.

Whether this moral impulse lasted long, in what it consisted, and what new foundations it laid for moral development, I shall relate in the following as the happier half of my youth.<sup>1</sup>

1855-1857.

<sup>1</sup> Tolstoy intended to publish a continuation of this book, but never published it.